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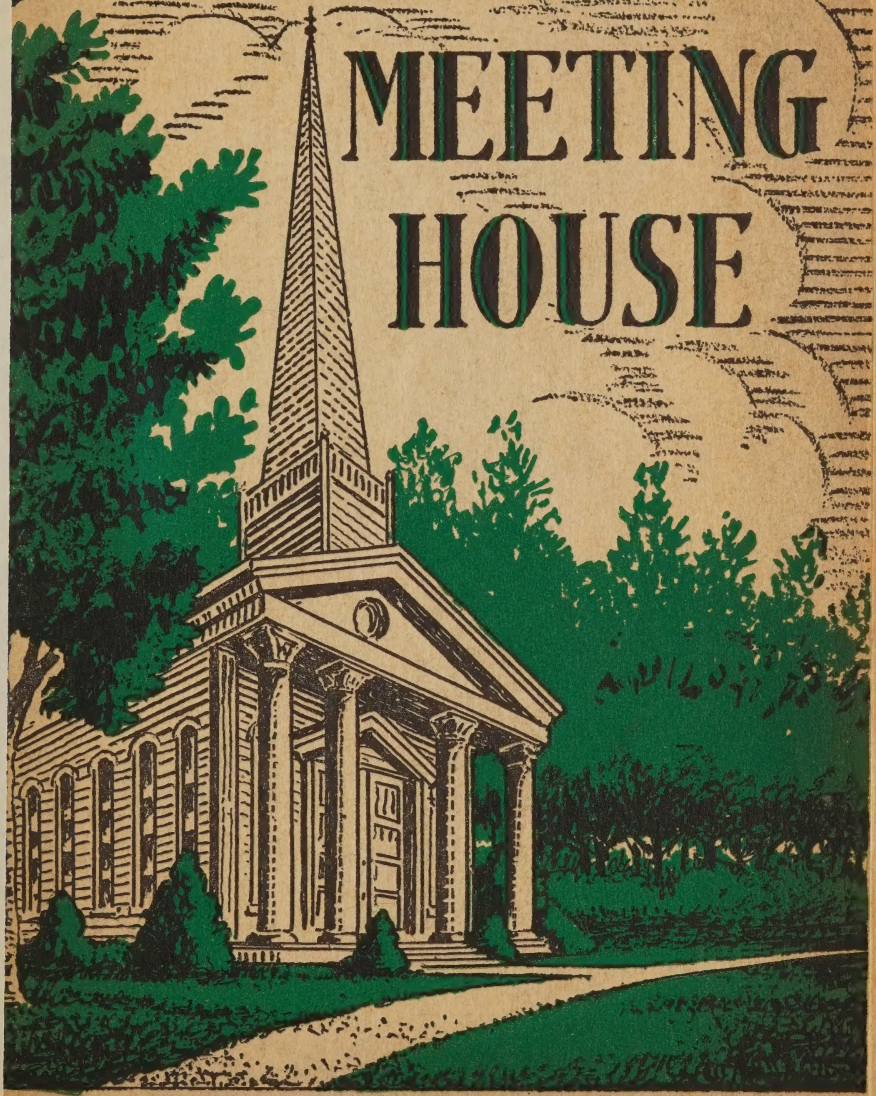
The METHODIST MEETING HOUSE



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THE METHODIST MEETING HOUSE

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PAUL NEFF GARBER
Dean of the Divinity School
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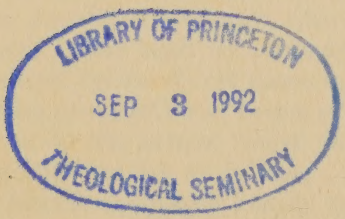

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INTRODUCTION

By Bishop Arthur J. Moore
President of the Board of Missions and Church Extension of The Methodist Church

In a period when the greatest of all wars rages over the larger portion of the earth and involves many of the nations in which American Methodism operates its far-flung program of Christian missions, the Board of Missions and Church Extension offers as the textbook for the Church School of Missions in 1941-1942 a book on the Methodist Meeting House and its contribution to the development and stability of our Republic. When the thoughts of all people are concentrated on the world conflagration and the threat against the institutions and ideals in which we so steadfastly believe, and when the problems of peace and reconstruction deserve the thoughtful consideration of earnest men and women everywhere, why should Methodists be asked to study a book which concerns itself with the houses in which they worship God? Why not a book on some aspect of the international situation?

Certainly the editors were aware of the international situation and its implications for democracy and religion. Their choice of a subject was deliberately made, after much thought and consultation, and it was based on fundamental considerations. The part played by the church house in America, and the matter of building more and better houses of worship, is by no means unrelated to the present world situation. "The Churches are America's first line of defense."

The present international situation and its implications for the church are now receiving, and will continue to receive, major emphasis in nearly all our current newspapers and magazines, in conferences and public addresses, and in nearly all other publicity channels. No Methodist will remain untouched by this tremendous flood of discussion. It would be difficult to produce a worthy study book on any subject connected with the

war and the future social order. The issues are undecided. The facts are not available. Social conditions are rapidly changing. Any such book produced at the moment would almost certainly be out of date before it came from the press.

In such a time it is deemed most important to strengthen the fundamental base of the Church in America. That base is the Church's permanent institutional life, which centers about the building in which men worship God, train their children in morals and religion, and form their social and moral ideals. In any American community the church building represents the fundamental bulwark of democracy and stable government. The enemies of democracy and liberty today are the enemies of the Church, and to strengthen the Church is to help circumvent those enemies. Rightly interpreted, therefore, the present volume is a contribution to the maintenance of morality, democracy, and human liberty in an hour when these things are threatened.

Except in theory and in a spiritual sense, there is no Church apart from its permanent sanctuary. Revivals and religious movements of various kinds have swept across the world from time to time, but none of them ever became rooted in the soil and achieved permanence and influence until buildings had been erected in which the results could be conserved and perpetuated.

This book is commended to "the people called Methodists" throughout America. In each of the 40,000 congregational units which compose The Methodist Church in the United States classes should be formed for its careful study. The standing of the author as a historian of Methodism is a sufficient guarantee of its historical accuracy and its interesting nature. If the message which this volume was written to convey is understood and acted upon by the Methodist people, a tremendous contribution will be made to the future of the Church and to the ultimate supremacy of those ideals for which the Church stands.

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CHAPTER I

THE CHURCH AND ITS SANCTUARY

The impulse to provide places of worship has been basic with mankind. The writings of the Hebrews record the fact that their noblest and greatest leaders erected altars of various kinds. Wherever Abraham settled he built an altar before digging a well or pitching a tent. Dr. F. W. Mueller reminds us that Abraham "never lost sight of this consecutive order. The altar, as a shrine to Jehovah, was always first, then the well, the medium of service to others, and finally the tent as a home for himself."

The high places, tabernacles, temple, and synagogues represented to the Hebrews the presence of Jehovah. Moses had been instructed by Jehovah: "And let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them." The Psalmist expressed a common feeling when he wrote: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." Again, the Psalmist could write: "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts. My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord," and "Oh, send out thy light and thy truth, let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacle."

During his youth and his ministry Jesus frequented the temple and the synagogue. Luke tells of the visit of Jesus to Nazareth and says, "As his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet." When Jesus saw that the temple was being used for sacrilegious purposes he drove the money changers from it, declaring, "It is written, my house

shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves."

The early Christians followed the example of Jesus in attending the synagogues. It is recorded that the Apostle Paul "preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews."

Persecution, however, drove the early Christians from the synagogues. Poverty and persecution made it impossible for the Christians of the first and second centuries to erect church edifices, and they worshipped in homes, in the catacombs, and in "upper rooms." When asked by the prefect of Rome, "Where do you assemble?" Justin Martyr, an early Christian, replied, "Where each man can and will."

As persecution decreased, the Christians found themselves at liberty to follow the impulse to build places of worship. By the middle of the third century many churches were built. Waves of persecution destroyed some of these, but new buildings arose when the period of intolerance passed. It has been said that when the Christians grew strong enough to build churches the doom of paganism was sealed and men knew that the Christian faith had come to stay.

The importance of the church building was recognized by the first Christian emperors. Constantine, upon his conversion to Christianity, immediately began to aid in the erecting of magnificent Christian churches. Imperial funds were used for this purpose; and when paganism was finally destroyed many of its temples were remodeled and consecrated as Christian churches.

The interest of Methodists in church buildings began with John Wesley. He inherited his love for the house of God from his parents, Samuel and Susannah Wesley. His religious training in the home was closely related to the church, for as soon as the Wesley children could be carried they were taken to the parish church and taught to be reverent during the services. At the age of eight John Wesley was admitted to holy com-

munion in the church at Epworth; in this church he was baptized and confirmed, and throughout his life he never lost his love for this church in which his father preached for many years.

Wesley's love for the house of worship continued during his stay in Charterhouse school and Oxford University. Although only ten when he entered the Charterhouse, he wrote his parents that he was reading the Bible, going to church, and saying his prayers. At a time when most of the students at Oxford absented themselves from chapel and church services, John and Charles Wesley attracted attention by their regular attendance. It was in part the methodical attendance of Wesley and other members of the Holy Club at divine services that caused an Oxford student to say of them, "Here is a new set of Methodists sprung up"—a derisive remark that eventually furnished the name for a great Church.

Immediately after his great Aldersgate experience on May 24, 1738, Wesley began to proclaim in Anglican churches the vital religion which had possessed him, but he soon found the churches closed to him. He was too enthusiastic for many of the conservative Anglican leaders, and within less than a year Wesley realized that he was not wanted in Anglican pulpits.

Wesley's love for the consecrated building made him hesitate to preach in any other place. This, however, was only a temporary hesitation, for he soon followed the suggestion of George Whitefield and decided to preach in the open air. On April 2, 1739, Wesley wrote in his *Journal:* "I submitted to be more vile, and standing on a little grassy mound, preached to a great crowd from the words, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath appointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.'" This was his first open-air sermon, and during the following fifty years most of his 42,400 sermons were preached outside of church buildings. An examination of Wesley's *Journal* reveals that he preached in all types of buildings and in many strange

outdoor settings. Once he wrote from Armagh: "This was the first time I ever preached in a stable and I believe more good was done by this than by all the other sermons I have preached."

Yet he always preferred the meeting house. He once wrote: "I do prefer the preaching in a church when I am suffered; and yet, when I am not, the wise Providence of God overrules this very circumstance for good, many coming to hear because of the uncommonness of the thing, who otherwise would not have heard at all." This has ever been the typical Methodist attitude. Methodists have always preferred a meeting house set apart for divine worship, but in their spiritual crusade since 1738 the followers of Wesley have never hesitated to make temporary use of the open air or any type of building for preaching the gospel to the people.

Wesley, moreover, did not believe in an evangelism which left converts without guidance or oversight. He early felt the need of a meeting place for his followers. He did not believe in solitary religion and he knew that outdoor preaching would be impossible in England during the winter months.

On May 9, 1739, within five weeks of his first open-air service, Wesley purchased land in Bristol for the first Methodist meeting house, which was to be "a place of Christian fellowship and instruction." He selected as the site a garden between the Horse Fair, which he said was "a prominent part of the city," and Broadmead, "with its avenue of trees opened to the meadows and river beyond." The cornerstone was laid on May 12, 1739, and the building, since known as the New Room, was opened for worship on June 3, 1739, before actual completion.

The New Room played an important part in early Methodism. Many conferences were held there and important decisions were made that affected the movement. It was in this room that Francis Asbury volunteered to go to America. Wesley spent much time at the New Room, and it is today the only Methodist

building that has been intimately associated with the entire history of Methodism. Despite the bombing of Bristol by the Germans, the New Room, the oldest Methodist church in the world, is, at the time of this writing, still standing.

Although the New Room was the first, the Foundry, in London, became the main chapel for early Methodism. In the autumn of 1739, when Wesley was faced with the problem of securing a building for London Methodists to use during the winter months, he was offered a long lease on an old foundry. It had formerly been used for the manufacture of cannon, but had been abandoned for more than twenty years and was described as "a vast, uncouth heap of ruins." Wesley leased it for ninety-nine years for $575. He transformed it by expending approximately $4,000, and for forty years the Foundry was the headquarters of English Methodism. The first sermon preached there by Wesley was on November 11, 1739. He wrote in his *Journal* that "at five in the evening" he preached "in the place which had been the King's Foundry for cannon." One of Wesley's first sermons at the Foundry was based upon the very appropriate text: "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people, and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." After forty years the Foundry was abandoned in favor of City Road Chapel, London. On August 8, 1779, Wesley wrote: "This was the last night which I spent at the Foundry. What hath God wrought there in one-and-forty years!"

The Foundry has always been the model for Methodist congregations. It was more than a place for preaching; it was the center for the early Methodist social program. An employment bureau and a loan society were opened. There was a dispensary where the poor could secure free medicine and medical service, and a bookroom where Wesley's publications were sold.

A section was used during the week as a schoolroom where neglected boys of London were taught, and there were houses for windows and orphans, who were cared for at the expense of the membership. The Foundry was an institutional church.

During the Wesleyan revival hundreds of Methodist chapels were built and annual collections were made for the erection of meeting houses. It is doubtful whether the Methodist movement could have survived otherwise, for when "the hammer was heard on the first Methodist chapel it proclaimed to all the world that the Methodist church was born." George Whitefield was perhaps a greater preacher than John Wesley, and thousands were converted under his ministry; but Whitefield never organized societies or secured houses of worship for his followers. Today no religious group traces its origin to Whitefield. Our Methodism is in existence largely because Wesley, in contrast to Whitefield, organized societies and built chapels for his converts.

Wesley was assisted in building chapels by the first convert from the aristocracy, Lady Selina, Countess of Huntingdon. Although her work at first was confined to the upper social strata, she became interested in church building when at Brighton she came into contact with a Methodist society unable to erect a house of worship. The spirit of this struggling society so impressed Lady Huntingdon that she sold some jewels and with the proceeds erected a chapel. She was the first patroness of Methodist church extension, for she began to purchase halls, theaters, and dilapidated buildings and remodeled them as chapels. It is estimated that she gave $500,000 for the support of these chapels and the preachers. Before her death her chapels were scattered throughout England. By her contributions she won the title of the "Queen of Methodism."

From the beginning the church building has played an important role in America. When the first colonists reached

Jamestown, on May 13, 1607, they immediately erected a church; it was a board nailed between two trees with a canvas spread across the branches overhead, and here the services of the Anglican Church were held. "This was our church," wrote Captain John Smith, "till we built a homely thing like a barne, set upon Cratchets, covered with rafts, sedge and earth; so was also the walls—yet we had daily common prayer morning and evening, every Sunday two sermons; and every three months the holy communion till our minister died; but our prayers daily; with an Homily on Sundays, we continued two or three years after till more Preachers came; and surely God did mercifully hear us."

This procedure was typical of all the colonists, regardless of nationality or creed. "One of the first acts of the early settlers was to erect a meeting house or church" is found many times in the colonial records. The church was usually the first building erected by common effort.

Among the Puritans and Separatists of New England the meeting house was the center of all community life, religious and secular. A Dutch merchant who visited Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1628 wrote: "Upon the hill they had a large square meeting house, with a flat roof, made of thick sawn planks, stayed with oak beams, upon the top of which they have six cannons, which shoot iron balls of four and five pounds, and command the surrounding country. The lower part they use for their church, where they preach on Sundays, and the usual holidays." In Puritan New England legislation required each new town to erect a church on the commons.

Even the necessity of erecting forts did not cause the early colonists to neglect their churches. When the Dutch arrived in New Amsterdam (now New York) they decided to build a fort, and "near it, on the East River, a church for general worship with a dwelling and stable adjoining, for the use of

the Rev. Mr. Bogardus." In like manner, when the Swedes came to Delaware they erected a fort on the shores of Christiana Creek and built a place of worship within the enclosure.

The first Methodists coming to America brought with them the love of the meeting house. Chapels arose in America a few years after the first Methodist sermons were preached. There is not unanimity of opinion as to the first Methodist chapel erected in the new world. It is claimed by many that Robert Strawbridge built it in Maryland. Strawbridge was born in Ireland and was converted under the preaching of John Wesley. He became a local preacher, and because of his advocacy of Methodism was driven from his native county, Leitrim. He preached in other parts of Ireland and then migrated to America. Upon his arrival he settled near Sam's Creek in Frederick County, Maryland, which was then the western frontier of that colony. The date of his arrival in America has never been definitely ascertained, the dates offered varying from 1761 to 1766.

In Maryland, Strawbridge preached in his own home and in those of his neighbors and soon organized a Methodist society of fifteen persons. He built a little log church about a mile south of the present town of New Windsor, Maryland. "The Log Meeting House" was a crude structure, twenty-two feet square. Light and air came from holes sawed in the logs. The congregation entered and left through a large space cut like a doorway at the front. The ground was the floor. Though used for a long period, it was never finished and remained always without windows. When Francis Asbury preached there in the winter of 1772, he expressed sympathy for his hearers shivering on backless benches, and he had to tie a handkerchief over his own head to keep his ears from the cold.

Strawbridge's "Log Meeting House" remained standing until 1844, when it was made into a barn. In 1914 a marker was

erected bearing the inscription, "On This Spot Stood The Log Meeting House Erected About 1764."

Strawbridge may be considered the pioneer leader in church extension in America. Shortly after building the log meeting house he made tours through Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, preaching, organizing small Methodist societies, and building crude log churches. When the first official missionaries sent by John Wesley arrived, Strawbridge turned over to them the churches that he had erected. In 1773 he deeded to trustees six churches for John Wesley and such persons as should be "appointed at the yearly conference of the people called Methodists in England."

While Robert Strawbridge was raising the banner of Methodism in Maryland, another local preacher, Philip Embury, was organizing Methodism in New York City. Embury was born in Ireland in 1728 and in 1752 was converted to Methodism. He served as a class leader and local preacher in Ireland, but for financial reasons migrated to America, arriving in New York City in August, 1760. For six years he did not exercise his office as local preacher; but in 1766, in obedience to the urgency of his cousin, Mrs. Barbara Heck, he preached the first Methodist sermon in New York City, to a congregation of four white people and one Negro, and enrolled his listeners into a Methodist class.

For a short period Embury held services in his own home, but in 1767 a "rigging loft," 18 by 60 feet in size, was obtained by the Methodists. This soon proved inadequate and it was decided that a church building was necessary. The Methodists being too poor to put up a building, the citizens of New York City were asked to assist in the building project. Two hundred and fifty-seven persons, including the mayor and two Negro servants, subscribed.

The meeting house, known as Wesley Chapel, was erected

on John Street and dedicated on October 30, 1768. It was built of stone, covered with stucco, and whitewashed inside. The benches were without backs and a crude ladder led to the gallery. The church cost approximately $3,000, and was legally characterized as a residence, because of a law against erecting churches for dissenting sects.

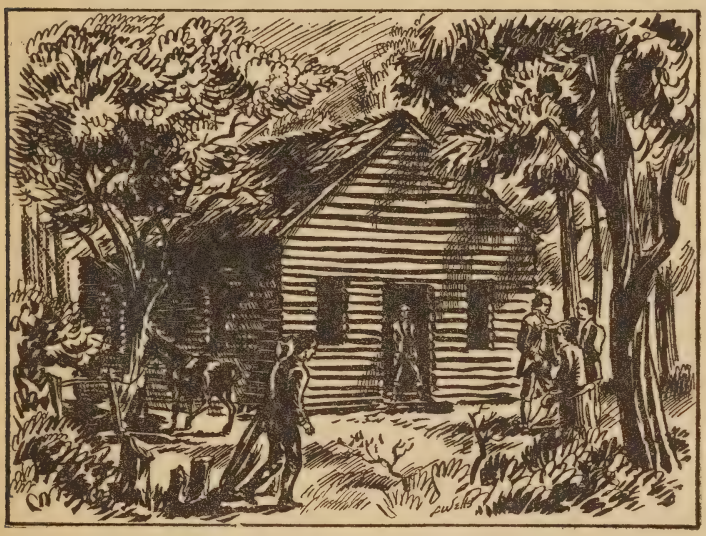
Wesley Chapel, later known as John Street Methodist Church, has had a continuous existence since 1768. The present building was erected in 1841 and is a shrine that should be seen by all Methodists who visit New York City. The interest of American Methodists in preserving this historic church is shown by the fact that the General Conference appoints the trustees for the John Street Church.

It is claimed by many that John Street Church is the mother church of American Methodism. It is the personal opinion of the author that Strawbridge erected the first Methodist church in America, but the lack of historical records makes a dogmatic statement impossible. It is certainly true that "the first rural Methodist church was built in Maryland and the first city Methodist church was erected in New York City."

St. George's Methodist Church, in Philadelphia, is the oldest Methodist house of worship in America. By 1767 the Methodists in Philadelphia had been organized into a small society and were worshipping in a sail loft. In the following year the society moved from the sail loft to a "pot house in Loxley's Court." By November, 1769, Joseph Pilmoor, who had been sent to America as a Methodist preacher by John Wesley, wrote: "We met to consult about getting a more convenient place to preach in. What we had would not contain half of the people who wished to hear the word, and winter was approaching so that they could not stand without."

In 1769 an unfinished church was sold at public auction, and a mentally unbalanced youth made a bid of $3,500, which was

accepted. The father of the youth sold the building to the Methodists for $3,250. On November 24, 1769, the Methodists held their first service in the building. It was described as "the shell of an unfinished church." For many years it remained un-



"THE LOG MEETING HOUSE"

This meeting house was erected by Robert Strawbridge near Sam's Creek, Frederick County, Maryland. It is considered by many to have been the first Methodist church building in America.

finished and unfurnished because of the poverty of the Methodists. The first conference of American Methodism was held there, and there Bishop Francis Asbury preached his first sermon in America. When the British occupied Philadelphia during the Revolution, St. George's was used first as a hospital and later for a riding school.

Except for this occupation by the British, St. George's has

been in continuous use to the present time. Because of its large size, seating one thousand persons, Bishop Asbury often called it "the cathedral of Methodism." St. George's Church still stands at Fourth and Race Streets in Philadelphia, the only memorial of pre-Revolutionary Methodism and the oldest house of worship in American Methodism.

Another chapel sacred to American Methodists is Lovely Lane Chapel, in Baltimore, built in 1774. This chapel with the beautiful name was actually a rude structure. For the first ten years it had no stove and the benches had no backs.

The claim of Lovely Lane Chapel to historic fame is due to the fact that in it the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized. On December 24, 1784, sixty of the eighty-three Methodist preachers then in America assembled in Lovely Lane Chapel for the Christmas Conference which founded the Methodist Episcopal Church and adopted the episcopal form of government. The first bishops, Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke, were elected in this chapel. The first *Book of Discipline* and the *Guide for Public Worship* were adopted there. In Lovely Lane Chapel it was decided to found a Methodist college, and the first contribution for Methodist missionary work, that in Nova Scotia, was made there.

All American Methodists regret that in 1786 Lovely Lane Chapel was torn down. Years later the Merchants Club of Baltimore was erected on the site. The American Methodist Historical Society has placed a bronze tablet on the building, bearing this inscription: "Upon This Site Stood from 1774 to 1786 the Lovely Lane Meeting House in Which Was Organized December, 1784, the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America."

Another early Methodist church still in existence today is Barratt's Chapel, near Frederica, in Kent County, Delaware. It was built in 1780 upon ground donated by Philip Barratt,

a member of the General Assembly and a close friend of Francis Asbury. It was a pretentious edifice for pioneer Methodism, being "42 feet by 48 feet, built of brick, 2 stories high." It was erected during the American Revolution, when Methodism was being persecuted; one observer, watching the construction, declared that "it was no use to put up so large a building for the Methodists, for after the war a corncrib could hold them all." Francis Asbury wrote in his *Journal* that after a lecture at Perdin's he "engaged the friends to subscribe seven hundred weight of pork towards the meeting house at Barratt's."

Barratt's Chapel is of historic interest because the first celebration of the Lord's Supper in America by an ordained Methodist preacher occurred there on November 14, 1784, administered by Dr. Thomas Coke. The Christmas Conference in Lovely Lane Chapel and the subsequent organization of the Church resulted from a decision made by Coke and Asbury on November 14, 1784, at Barratt's Chapel.

What are some of the values of the meeting house?

Many years ago Bishop Levi Scott wisely declared: "God does not dwell among a people that do not make him a sanctuary." In more recent times Dr. T. D. Ellis expressed a similar view: "You may evangelize a new community by holding a tent meeting. You may gather together in an organization the Methodists living in a new section of a city. But you cannot keep alive and growing the spiritual life of a people until you have provided a place of worship where the work of organized Christianity may be carried on." Bishop W. F. McMurry declared that "long experience has proved beyond question the inefficiency of the old method of appointing a man to a field in a needy section of a city without any organized movement or effective plan to erect a suitable house of worship. These men have toiled faithfully and made converts but there has been

little permanent fruit because there was no provision to preserve the results of their labors."

The church edifice is necessary in order to carry out the total program of the Great Commission. It is possible to *preach the gospel* without a building, but the command to *teach* requires one. In many areas Methodism failed after the evangelistic era because it did not "garrison" the land with churches in which, from pulpit and classroom, the Christian message could be taught as well as preached.

Not only of the Christian Church is this true. Any institution that establishes itself and maintains growth must be domiciled. The physicians need hospitals, the educators need colleges and universities. To those who have claimed that Christianity could continue without a building, the reply has been: "Perhaps there could be a vital Christianity in a community without a church, but so far we have not found it so." A congregation must have a headquarters for its operations, a place where the members can meet for worship, instruction, and the fulfilling of social needs. The army marching against evil must have a home base.

The church is as necessary to the progress of Christianity as is the home to the preservation of the family. It has truly been written: "Churches, like families, cannot live and thrive in hired or temporary shelters. It is not sufficient that a man and wife have a place to stay, to eat and sleep; their life purpose cannot be accomplished without a home. There must be some place around which to cluster their affections. They cannot love a boarding house. Nor can home love be thus developed in their children. To them all boarding houses look alike. Nor can love for the church and its institutions be developed and maintained without a building, an altar all its own. Where love is lacking, there can be no loyalty."

The church building is a daily reminder that God is in the

community. It is a public witness, proclaiming that something in the locality is definitely dedicated to God. It may be very crude, but it is a witness to the fact that the people in that area would have God dwell among them. Every meeting house is a perpetual monument to the divine presence. Ira G. Bidwell said in 1871 that the building of a church in a community has caused men and women to feel that God has moved into their neighborhood and taken up his residence among them; that the Kingdom of Heaven is among them. Though a building is only so much lumber, brick, stone, glass, nails, and paint, when these materials are made into a house of worship they bring to the people the mystery of the invisible world and "the things which are not seen."

Signifying as it does the presence of the divine, the church edifice influences all who pass by it. It is a silent witness even to those who never enter it. Bishop Creighton, of the Anglican Church, once said: "The building of a church might be a small thing. It is, but it is something. It is useful to a thousand people who never set foot within its walls. It preached them a sermon every time they passed it and it reminded them in the midst of their activity and thoughtlessness that the world was God's world after all."

The church edifice wields a tremendous force for moral betterment. Bishop F. D. Leete has said: "The knowledge that a building dedicated to God stands on the street corner or just down the block, and the sights and sounds which attend its presence in the vortex of the city's pride and shame, are a constant moral force, the more potent because subtle and pervasive." A beautiful sanctuary stands as a barrier against wrong and a rallying point for the better forces of a community. It has a salutary effect upon public sentiment. The minister preaches two or three times a week, but the house of God speaks every day.

The church building has always been a place of inspiration for the highest and noblest in thought and action. The sanctuaries have often been appropriately called Methodism's power stations and production units. The building may be a "little brown church in the vale" or an imposing Gothic cathedral; but in both there is a spiritual power and dynamic that inspires the worshippers. This inspiration is more vital because the worshippers relate the church to the most sacred moments of life. Happy homes have had their birth at its altars and forgiveness has been experienced in its services. Precious memories cluster about God's house. It is no wonder that Robert Louis Stevenson wrote: "I find I never weary of great churches. It is my favorite kind of mountain scenery."

The inspiration of worship is not merely personal enthusiasm. Great souls have carried from the sanctuary noble resolves which became dedicated to the work of social service. From the church have come the majority of the leaders in the field of education, and in social and moral reforms. From the church has come the inspiration for the great charitable and benevolent causes. God's house has been an instrumentality for the cultivation and patronage of the arts and sciences. If the noble thoughts and great principles which have been communicated to men's souls in the church should be eliminated, the past would be blank and the future dark. Because of their restraining power over evil the churches have rightly been called America's first line of defense.

In hours of trouble worshippers find in the church as nowhere else a divine comfort and consolation. It is in the sanctuary that anxious and despairing persons commune with God and feel the touch of His spirit. A church may be crude, but persons distraught by the perplexities of life find within its sacred shadows the quiet and peace which calm and bless their daily lives. In these days of international chaos the house of God is making

a great contribution in giving consolation to millions. Roger Babson has uniquely expressed it: "To close the churches now would be like closing hospitals in the time of an epidemic."

While the church edifice is essential to the progress of Christianity in all places, it is especially necessary in foreign mission fields. The building of a church is an assurance to the converts of the permanence of the Christian cause among them. As long as congregations meet in homes and rented halls the people tend to look upon the missionaries as birds of passage with no permanent foothold in the country. An experienced missionary wrote in 1923: "If we have only a mud hut it is of inestimable value to our villages, for it lets the village folk know that we have come to stay."

As late as 1918 a Methodist missionary wrote: "If you could see some of the places where I preach the gospel of Jesus Christ it would bring tears to your eyes and shame to your hearts. If a foreigner should come to your town, preaching some strange doctrine in an out-of-the-way street, in a little hole, dark and dirty, with not the least suggestion of comfort or hygiene, where all the surroundings bespeak inefficiency and smallness of purpose and lack of imagination, how long do you think you would stop to consider the claims of the man's religion on your life? This description may not mean much to you, but if you could stand by my side and look into the faces of men as they stop in the street and look for a moment into the place where I am preaching, and then pass on with an expression of pity or contempt written all over them, then you would understand how my heart cries out for better material equipment, for preaching places that will not repulse more than our message attracts."

The need of Protestant church buildings is pre-eminently evident in those foreign mission fields where for centuries the non-Christian religions have had splendid and costly houses of worship. In such countries Protestantism cannot do its most

successful work without adequate churches, for the habits of the people suggest and demand buildings in keeping with the solemnity and dignity of the Christian message. Such people do not turn easily to a religion that is poorly housed or to services conducted in private places. Bishop Warren A. Candler, after a visit to the Methodist missions in Japan, wrote: "You cannot go to Japan and make any great impression against the Buddhism of the temples unless you put up respectable houses."

The Protestant cause has been retarded in Roman Catholic countries because of the lack of beautiful churches. Roman Catholics have always stressed the importance of church edifices, and for converts with a Catholic background a good house of worship is almost indispensable. It is difficult for persons taught from youth to venerate the church as a holy place to join a movement which has no such buildings. Missionaries in Latin-American countries have constantly begged for funds to erect churches. They have pointed out that Methodism has labored at a disadvantage because, in contrast with Catholicism, "our buildings are mere halls, on side streets, small, uninviting, badly lighted, poorly ventilated, and utterly inadequate."

It is in those sections of the foreign mission fields where church buildings have been erected that Methodism has invariably had large success. Bishop Candler has asserted that "where we have had small success there were poor houses. In some places where we thought it very hopeless or useless to work we began to prosper as soon as we got a house. Only then does the church become an institution, influential in the total life of the people." The erection of a large Protestant church at Medak, India, caused a Hindu village chief to declare: "We used to think that Christianity would soon pass away and that the missionary would leave the country—but now this great church is a sign to us that your religion is for everybody and that for all time it is firmly established."

CHAPTER II

THE CHURCH ON THE FRONTIER

John Street Methodist Church, New York, St. George's Methodist Church, Philadelphia, and Barratt's Chapel, Delaware, were not typical of the early church buildings in American Methodism. Strawbridge's log cabin was a better representative of the usual type, because Methodism was a frontier movement and most of the early church buildings were erected for frontiersmen.

The circuit riders were pioneers. They did not wait until cities were founded to proclaim their message; they went searching for souls on every frontier. When George Clark entered Georgia in 1799 he found people who had never heard a sermon and had to be directed when to stand and kneel in the meetings. In 1809 James B. Finley preached in Ohio to men unacquainted with religious services. Finley says: "Accordingly I called the people together under a large oak in a small prairie. The people, however, would not come near me, but stood in the plum bushes around, and I preached to them in their hiding places, Jesus Christ and the resurrection."

When Bishop Francis Asbury saw hundreds of people "almost foodless, shelterless, clothesless, toiling along on foot and horse" across the Allegheny Mountains, he wrote in his *Journal*: "We must send preachers after these people." Keeping up with the frontier became an obsession with the circuit riders. Bishop Joshua Soule on one occasion declared: "I never suffered any man to go before me, where I cannot follow." S. W. Ingham, an itinerant in Iowa, once wrote: "I preached where Quasqueton now is when there were but four families in the

vicinity and no others within sixteen miles. That was the extreme frontier there. *I always followed up the frontier to the last house."*

Methodism in many places began its work in God's first temples, the open spaces. Many sermons were delivered in the open air. Woolman Hickson, who introduced Methodism in Brooklyn, preached his first sermon in a street, standing upon a table. When John King began to preach in Baltimore his initial sermon was delivered from a blacksmith's block and his second from a table. When Jesse Lee, arriving in Norwalk, Connecticut, found no building open to him, he went into the street and by his singing attracted his first audience in New England.

The log cabins that dotted the American frontier served as the first real churches of Methodism. The first itinerants rarely preached in a church. When Joshua Monroe went to the Erie Circuit, in 1810, he found that twenty-three of his twenty-four preaching appointments were in private houses. In 1835 Alfred Brunson was presiding elder of a district which included all of Northern Illinois and Northern Iowa. He wrote in his journal: "All my quarterly meetings were held in private cabins except in the big church of Dubuque." The official records, instead of listing the name of a church, often gave the name of the frontiersman in whose home preaching services were held. In 1812 the preaching places on the Lebanon Circuit in Tennessee were as follows: "Ebenezer, Bethlehem, Hank's, Ross's, Crabtree's, Eatherly's, Rice's, Hancock's, Center, Eckles's, Baker's, Shaw's, McMinn's, Dunkin's, Felt's, McGiner's, Lankerster's, Harvey's, Smith's, Hodge's, Douglass's, Malone's, Casey's."

For a pulpit the circuit rider used a chair. The women were seated upon beds or upon boards stretched across chairs, and the children climbed to the loft. In fair weather the men congre-

gated outside the cabins, and, in order to be heard by all, the minister stood in the doorway. George Crooks in the following words has beautifully described such a gathering: "The tethered horses, the waving grain without, the deep silence of nature, undisturbed save by the song of the rustic worshippers or the voice of the preacher, blended into a scene which no one who has been a participant in such a scene can ever forget."

Barns often served as pioneer Methodist temples when the private homes were too small to accommodate the congregation. Such buildings were especially useful because they were easy to guard against rowdies, who frequently disturbed meetings held in the open air. Barns were used for the quarterly meetings, when the people from the entire circuit assembled. In his *Journal* Bishop Francis Asbury writes of preaching in "Jones' barn," "Jarratts' barn," "Woolsey's barn," "Walker's barn."

When cabins and barns proved too small, services were held under brush arbors. Barton H. Cartwright, after holding the first quarterly meeting in Iowa, wrote: "The cabins were small, and not one of them could hold the people. We repaired to the grove and hastily prepared seats." During the summer months thousands of Methodist meetings were held in groves, in forests, and under brush arbors. "Camp meeting" soon became a familiar and sacred term among Wesley's followers.

The circuit rider often reached the frontier in advance of the schoolhouse, but when a school was erected it was often used by all denominations for divine services. James B. McFerrin wrote as follows of his experiences in Franklin County, Alabama; "There was no house of worship in the place. The various denominations occupied a small schoolhouse, and worshipped together or separately, as occasions might suggest." The burning of a schoolhouse at Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, caused a newspaper reporter to write of the great conflagra-

tion in which the Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Congregational, and Episcopal churches had been consumed. On the other hand, there were many instances of a Methodist church being used as a schoolhouse. When, in 1834, the subscription paper was drawn for the first Methodist church in Iowa, it read: "The above house is built for the use of the Methodist

"RIGGING LOFT," 120 WILLIAMS STREET, NEW YORK
Prior to the erection of John Street Church in 1768 the Methodists in New York City worshiped in the loft of this building. Many early Methodist groups in America were organized in attics and lofts.

Episcopal Church . . . . but when not occupied by said Church, shall be open for Divine Service by other Christian Denominations; and may be used for a common School, at the discretion of the Trustees."

Courthouses were also used by the early Methodists. James Jenkins went to Lancaster, South Carolina, in 1833, and later

wrote: "Having no church in the village, we preached in the courthouse." Before the first Methodist church was built in Richmond, Virginia, the Methodists used the old Henrico County Courthouse. This privilege, however, was soon withdrawn because the people residing nearby complained that the Methodists were disturbing the peace by their loud singing and shouting.

The tavern, being usually the largest house on the frontier, became at times the place of Methodist services. The first Methodist sermons preached in New Albany and Rising Sun, Indiana, were delivered in tavern barrooms. A sermon preached by James Conwell in a tavern at Laurel, Indiana, led to the conversion of the tavern keeper, who immediately disposed of his liquors and opened his barroom for preaching services; and it remained the permanent place of worship until the erection of a church. After a Methodist preacher had preached in a gambling house on the Pacific Coast, a listener remarked: "Well, boys, you may say what you please about the wickedness of Californians, but they are better than the Jews were in the day of Jesus Christ; for then they made the house of God a den of thieves, but now they are making a den of thieves the house of God."

In Newark, Ohio, in 1811, James B. Finley found no house open to him for preaching; so he went to the barroom of the tavern. He relates his experience as follows: "When I stepped into the door, I found the room full; and many were crowded around the bar, drinking. It looked to me more like the celebration of a bacchanalian orgie, than a place for the worship of God. But I had made an appointment; and I must fill it at all hazards; and as the Gospel was to be preached to every creature, my mission extended to every place this side of hell.

"I procured a stool, and, placing it beside the door, got upon it, and cried out, at the top of my voice, 'Awake, thou that

sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life.' For thirty minutes I labored to show the audience that they were on their way to hell, and as insensible of their danger as though locked fast in the embrace of sleep. I assured them that hell would soon awaken them. When I had done warning them of their danger and inviting them to Christ, I returned to the bushes, found my horse, and rode to brother Channel's. The barroom folks made search for me, but I was gone. They sent me word that if I came again they would roast me; but, notwithstanding, I made another appointment in the courthouse."

The Methodists even used boats as preaching places. When the first Methodist preachers came to New Iberia, Louisiana, they sought in vain for a place to hold services. It happened that "a pretty little New England brig" was in Bayou Teche, and the captain, being a Methodist, invited the preachers to hold services on the ship. This attracted a crowd and led to the providing of a permanent preaching place in the town. The diaries of the circuit riders show that along the Mississippi River flatboats frequently served temporarily as Methodist churches.

Many other places were used by the early Methodists. J. O. Foster, going to Dubuque, Iowa, found that the only place he could secure for a meeting was "a small inconvenient room over a grocery, the entrance to which was by a rickety stairs outside. While the few above were engaged in singing, praying, and speaking to one another of the good things of God to them, those in the grocery below were drinking, cursing, quarreling, and fighting." Bishop Francis Asbury wrote of preaching often in tobacco houses, paper-mills, poorhouses, and forts. Other circuit riders used Masonic halls, theaters, and warehouses.

Bishop Asbury and the early circuit riders spoke frequently in their journals of the slowness of the early Methodists in the

matter of erecting churches. For example, Asbury wrote: "I preached at a new meeting house, fourteen miles up the road towards Suffolk; here, after thirty years' labor, first and last, we have a chapel." In 1789, having visited Burlington, New Jersey, he wrote: "After twenty years preaching they have built a very beautiful meeting house at Burlington." Alfred Brunson wrote that church edifices in pioneer Methodism "were like angels' visits, few and far between." In 1801 Charles Giles declared that a "Methodist church was a strange thing . . . . a wonder in the land." The opponents of Methodism even pointed to the scarcity of Methodist houses of worship as one reason why the Wesleyan movement was destined to fail in America.

The circuit riders became the leaders in the church building program. Single handed, Glezen Fillmore erected in 1818 the first Methodist church in Buffalo, New York. He had, as he related, "no trustees, no time to make them, and nothing to make them of." James Axley, laboring in the Louisiana Territory, was unable to find a permanent preaching place. He decided, therefore, in 1807, to erect a church. With his own hands he cut down trees, hewed them into shape, made the shingles for the roof, built the pulpit, and cut the doors and windows.

Other examples might be given. When J. H. Hull went to Cambridge City, Indiana, he found an unfinished church. His first act was to sell his horse and apply the proceeds towards finishing the house. The people, inspired by his zeal, came to the rescue of the enterprise. William Ormond, dying, left a legacy "to build a house for God, in the neighborhood of his nativity." It became "Ormond's Chapel," near Snow Hill, North Carolina. It was said of B. F. Stegall, who worked in the Indian Territory, that "he was handy with hammer and saw. He built tabernacles in rural centers."

Building material was on the ground for the using, and it required little time for the woodman's axe to transform the sturdy

timber into a meeting house. Ebenezer Hearn tells how a church was erected on the Marion circuit in Alabama, in 1820: "I gathered as many men as I could, and with axes, wedges, and frows, we went to a high hill near the mouth of Coal Fire Creek, cleared out a place, cut logs, made boards and built a house, twenty by twenty-four feet, made a rough pulpit, and made one door, but as we could not get any planks we were content to have a dirt floor."

The early Methodists desired plain churches. In answer to the question "Is anything advisable with regard to building?" the first Methodist *Discipline* of 1784 stated: "Let all our chapels be built plain and decent; but not more expensive than is absolutely unavoidable: otherwise the necessity of raising money will make rich men necessary to us. But if so, we must be dependent upon them, yea; and governed by them. And then farewell to the Methodist discipline, if not doctrine too."

Bishop Asbury opposed any signs of Roman Catholicism or Anglicanism in the Methodist architecture. When he saw a bell on a Methodist church in Augusta, Georgia, he wrote: "And behold, here is a bell over the gallery . . . and cracked too; may it break! It is the first I ever saw in a house of ours in America; I hope it will be the last." A steeple on a Methodist church at Lynn, Massachusetts, caused Asbury to remark: "They have built a neat house in Lynn; but I am afraid of a steeple; and if they put this foolish addition, it must not be by Methodist order, or with Methodist money—they may pay for their own pride and folly." On another occasion, in 1813, Asbury exclaimed: "O rare steeplehouses, bells! (Organs by-and-by?) These things are against me, and contrary to the simplicity of Christ." Of the church at Newport, Rhode Island, Asbury wrote: "Grand house-steeple, pews by lottery; the end is to sanctify the means. Ah! What pliability to evil!"

The New England Conference of 1816 adopted a resolution

"that it shall be the duty of every preacher belonging to this conference, to use his influence against erecting expensive meeting houses, that they recommend that all our churches be built plain, decent, and no more expensive than is absolutely necessary." In 1824 a complaint was made to the trustees of John Street Church, New York, that some persons had placed cushions in the seats of the church. In 1827, when the leaders of the church at Gardiner, Maine, placed carpets in the aisles, some members protested against the extravagance in the house of God and actually refused to step upon the carpet.

It was argued that costly churches involved a wicked waste of money when souls were perishing on account of the lack of funds for all good causes. There was fear that expensive churches would tend to pride and vanity and thus affect unfavorably the spirituality of the members. Some Methodists even doubted whether God would bless a congregation that worshipped in an expensive house. Methodism was for the poor people. As late as 1860 Abel Stevens wrote: "Our mission has been chiefly to the poor; our chief glory will depart when we lose sight of this our chief historical distinction. Cheap chapels .... should be the rule, not the exception, with us."

Disciplinary action, however, was usually not needed to secure plainness in the early Methodist churches, for that was their distinctive characteristic. When, in 1799, Bishop Asbury found in Stokes County, North Carolina, a Methodist church, Love's Chapel, which had "glass windows and a yard fenced in," he was so surprised that he made a note of it in his *Journal*. He visited a Methodist church in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1800, and declared that if it were floored, ceiled, and glazed it would be a grand house. A church in Wilmington, North Carolina, with dimensions of sixty-six by thirty-six feet, was described by Bishop Asbury as "elegant."

Descriptions of some of the other churches of the period are

interesting. Dean's meeting house, in Wayne County, North Carolina, "was very rudely constructed of logs with the bark on; a hole was cut near the stand for a window, and another for a door, but no door or window was ever put in." In 1785 Bishop Thomas Coke described the church in Edenton, North Carolina, as being "like a pig-stie." It is no wonder that Methodist churches were spoken of contemptuously as "barns." In the Northwest some of the churches were built of sod. The second Methodist church in Dakota Territory was a mud house; the walls were sod, the floor was dirt, and the roof was sod.

Nearly all of these church buildings, whether in town or country, were of logs. At first, round, unhewn logs were used, and these often destitute of any sort of chinking to keep out the wind and rain. These buildings, however, compared very favorably with the houses in which the people lived, and did not evidence want of interest in the house of God. Building materials other than logs were scarce in those days.

The interior of the church was as plain as the exterior. Honorable Hiram Price once told of the church in Iowa which he joined in 1843: "I found there in the suburbs of the village where I now live a little church, twenty-four by thirty-six, walls fourteen feet high. The seats were free—free from upholstery, free from paint, free from backs—but there was a choice of seats even there. The best were made of slabs from the sawmill, with the flat side up. Others were made in a similar way, of poles split through the middle. They were the poorest kind of seats in which to take a nap during the sermon. We had on the church no cupola, belfry, or spire, but we had a judgment upon it, and an execution in the hands of the sheriff."

The pulpits were crude. In the church at Davenport, Iowa, in 1841, there was no pulpit except a big pine box. In the Landrum meeting house on the Hinckstone Circuit in Kentucky, about 1810, the pulpit had a puncheon floor, and two

forks driven into the ground with a cross piece for a hand board. A window opening behind the pulpit gave light for the preacher to read hymns, lessons, and text, and often it was the only window in the house. Many of the churches had no altars. The floors were usually of dirt.

A small number of the churches were built on foundations, but this condition often created a problem. In 1820 Alfred Brunson went to the Deerfield Circuit in the Erie Conference. He found a church that stood on blocks of wood or stone; but, since there was no underpinning, the space beneath became a rendezvous for the swine of the neighborhood. "In consequence," writes Brunson, "some of our night meetings were disturbed and often my voice would be entirely drowned by the hideous squealings, growlings, and thumpings on the under side of the floor. Everybody that knows anything about hogs knows that their stys are hot beds of fleas, called in those days 'minute men' or the 'jumping race.' The house then not being lathed or plastered, and the floor not being air or water tight, this jumping tribe by the thousands (at least it seemed so) found way into the place of worship. And the devotions were often disturbed by itching, scratching, and slapping occasioned by our tormentors. We were glad when winter came and silenced the marauders, even if we had a cold house to worship in."

The poverty of the early Methodists prevented them from providing means for heating the churches. In the winter they worshipped in cold buildings. After Bishop Asbury had preached on December 6, 1772, in a church in Maryland, he recorded: "Putting a handkerchief over my head, I preached, and after an hour's intermission (the people waiting all the time in the cold) I preached again." In 1811 William Burke wrote concerning the church in Cincinnati: "The Methodists being too poor to buy a stove to warm the house in winter, and on Sunday morning it being generally crowded, their breath

would condense on the walls, and the water would run down and across the floor." Bishop T. A. Morris preached at Wolf's Creek, Arkansas, in November, 1841. He states that the "people kindled a large fire in the front yard and when they got too cold to sit in comfort, they would go out to the fire, warm, and return."

Most of the churches had only primitive provision for lighting. In the church at Davenport, Iowa, built in 1841, "the chandelier was a block of wood, suspended by a rope from the ceiling. In this block three-quarter inch holes were bored into which tallow candles were inserted." In other places the lamps were lard-oil burners. The following is a description of the Clark Street Methodist Church, in Chicago: "With the oil of the day, generally lard, the church within, of an evening, resembled a cave dimly lighted with glimmering lanterns, the posts which held up the ceiling answering to dingy stalactites."

As can be surmised, the early frontier churches were built at minimum cost. The Methodists were poor, but such materials and merchandise as they had they offered to the church; and they gave of their labor freely. When, in 1811, the first Methodist church was built in Dayton, Ohio, only $78 of the $451.05 subscribed was in cash. One person was allowed a credit of four dollars for "spinning wheel and sundries." The only money expended in building the Methodist church at Truro, Massachusetts, in 1793, was eight dollars for nails. The subscription list for the Methodist church in St. Clair, Michigan, contained these two items: "Laura Graham, $1.25 in sewing. Lucretia Peer, $1.25 in short stocking. Paid." In 1832 William Fullbright was awarded the contract to build a church in the locality in Missouri which has since become the city of Springfield. "For the building and completion of the house, including the puncheon seats" he was paid $18. On the sub-

scription list were contributions of hats, shoes, tinware, leather, timber, and labor.

The early American Methodists followed the policy of John Wesley in requiring the separation of the men and the women in the churches. The answer to the question in the *Discipline* of 1784 "Is there any exception to the rule, 'Let the men and women sit apart?' was 'There is no exception. Let them sit apart in all our chapels.'" The strictness of the early Methodists on this point caused one member jokingly to remark that the "middle aisle was a dividing line over which neither sex dared to trespass." If there were two entrances to the churches, the men and women entered by separate doors.

On account of the haphazard methods of building, poor choices were often made in the selection of sites. Buildings were usually erected in obscure places, remote from the centers of population. The circuit system, of course, was largely responsible for this, for the first houses of worship served the rural people. When the Methodists in Detroit, Michigan, were offered a building site, they foolishly chose one entirely outside of the city. Shortly before his death Bishop Asbury complained in the following language of the poor statesmanship which was exhibited in the erection of churches: "Some benevolent man would give us a site, the ground being so poor you could not raise mullein stalks on it, and we would thank him and erect a house upon it, where the people would be sure not to find it." He continues: "I tell you what it is; if we wish to catch fish, we must go where they are, or where they are likely to come. We had better pay money for a site in a central position in a city, town or village, than have them give us half a dozen lots for nothing in some by-street or lane."

Bishop Asbury's criticism was well-founded, for in nearly all large cities Methodists worshipped in some alley or by-place, often unnoticed by the wealthy and the cultured groups.

Eligible sites could have been had for the asking, yet the earlier meeting houses were built for the accommodation of those who were then members of the society, with little or no reference to the permanent centers of population. Bishop T. A. Morris declared that "under the old dispensation, it was supposed that some difficulty in reaching the place of worship was a necessary sacrifice for the privilege of attending. Hence, village churches were located in the country, and frequently over a creek, and on top of the highest hill in the neighborhood." Elijah H. Pilcher declares that it seemed to be the general policy to keep Methodism at such a distance from the people as to make it cost search and labor to find it; and Nathan Bangs states that "even when a church edifice was erected, a site was generally selected in some remote retreat, remote from the center of population, as though Methodists were ashamed to be seen and heard by their neighbors."

The location of Methodist churches was at times affected by the attitude of non-Methodists who lived nearby. When it was decided to build a church in Richmond, Virginia, its erection was not accomplished without serious difficulties. The reputation which the early Methodists had made for loud singing and shouting was such that, when a suitable lot was sought in a popular locality, the real estate dealers hesitated to sell for fear the presence of the church would lower the value of land in the neighborhood. For two years those who had the matter in hand tried in vain to secure a lot and finally succeeded only by engaging a disinterested party to buy for them. When Aaron Hunt gave the Methodists in Redding, Connecticut, a lot near the Presbyterian church, the Presbyterians immediately proposed to donate a building lot for the Methodists at another place. They declared that they would be unable to hear their own minister preach because of the noise of the Methodist service.

One of the problems in early American Methodism concerned the pew system. This question arose when the New England Methodists, influenced by the prevailing Congregational plan, sold or rented pews as a means of meeting financial obligations. In 1811 the Chestnut Street Methodist Church of Portland, Maine, sold nineteen pews for $450, and for benches without backs charged one dollar a seat. Jesse Lee visited Boston in 1808 and stated that Bromfield Methodist church was very handsome, but he said: "It is not on the Methodist plan for the pews are sold to the highest bidder."

Prior to this time the policy of "free seats" had prevailed in Methodist churches, and for forty years the pew question was a major issue in American Methodism. The cry arose that the Methodists were forgetting the poor and catering to the wealthy and to the aristocracy. Peter Cartwright declared that the pew system excluded the poor, contravened the divine law, and prevented "the realization of that blessedness that God has provided for the poor." One annual conference resolved that the selling of pews had "a tendency to subvert the glorious peculiarity of our holy religion: 'The poor have the gospel preached unto them.'" It was held that those who came first should be seated first, since Methodism believed in the democratic principle that all men were equal in the sight of God. "Free grace and free sittings" was a proud boast. It was further argued that most people would be as unwilling to obtrude themselves into a private pew as into a private house. The feeling of the Methodists upon this issue was so strong that the General Conference of 1820 voted that it was contrary to Methodist economy to build houses with pews to sell or rent, and suggested that the annual conferences use their influence to prevent such churches from being built.

The pew system never became popular outside of New England, and the pewed churches were always in the minority in

early Methodism. The New England Methodists, however, argued that the pew system enabled families to be seated together, caused the upper classes to attend Methodist services, and solved the financial problem. One argument advanced was that Methodists could not build free churches in New England and that it would be better to have pewed churches than none at all. Af-

JOHN STREET CHURCH, NEW YORK CITY
It was dedicated on October 30, 1768. Many persons claim that it is the Mother church of American Methodism. The third building stands on the same site as a shrine of American Methodism.

ter years of controversy the General Conference of 1852 adopted a compromise rule which read: "Let all our churches be built . . . . with free seats wherever practicable."

Only a few of the old Methodist log cabin churches still remain. One of these is the Old Rehoboth Church, near Union, in Monroe County, West Virginia. It was completed in June,

1786, and is the oldest Protestant church west of the Allegheny Mountains. It is still standing in a good state of preservation and is used for special services each year. McKendree Chapel, built of poplar logs, near Cape Girardeau, Missouri, is preserved as a shrine by Missouri Methodism. It housed the first trans-Mississippi Methodist society. Strother's Meeting House, in Sumner County, Tennessee, in which Bishop Asbury held the first annual conference west of the Cumberland Mountains, has been removed for preservation to the campus of Scarritt College, at Nashville. It is fitting that these log cabin churches should be preserved to remind modern Methodists of the heroic era of their forefathers.

It must always be remembered that in those rude structures Methodism began the Christianization of the pioneer communities. These log cabin churches were small and inferior, but, as is true of all houses of worship, they led the frontiersmen to see that there was to be permanence in the Christian cause even in isolated places. Many of these houses would not be recognized as churches today; yet in them God owned and blessed the message of the circuit riders, and the thoughts of the frontiersmen were raised above the material and the commonplace. They served more than a religious purpose, for they were rallying centers for democracy, patriotism, and education. Stephen A. Douglas once declared that "the Methodist preacher with his saddle bags carried civilization throughout the West." In 1924 Congress, in donating the site for the statue of Bishop Francis Asbury, declared that Asbury's "continuous journeys through our cities, towns and villages and early settlements . . . greatly promoted the interests of patriotism, education, morality, and religion and were a distinct aid to the American Republic." These accomplishments could never have been brought about without the crude houses of worship that dotted the frontier.

CHAPTER III

THE RISE OF CHURCH EXTENSION

In the pioneer period Methodist church buildings had been "like angels visits, few and far between" and "a strange thing . . . . a wonder in the land;" but by 1850 the various branches of American Methodism had 13,280 churches. Between 1850 and 1860 there was an increase of 6,603, an increase of 2,500 more than the Baptists, Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians combined had built during that same period.

Large Methodist churches were being erected in the cities. Arch Street Church, in Philadelphia, was completed in 1870, at a cost of $200,000. In 1884 Bishop R. S. Foster declared that many churches were "rich and costly and not a few magnificent, on principal avenues in the great cities, where the fashionable and wealthy congregate; for the sons and daughters of the humble worshippers of the sail-loft have become rich and cultured."

By 1860 the log cabin churches were rapidly disappearing in the rural sections of the South and Middle West. They were being displaced by frame, brick, and stone buildings. A handsome Methodist church edifice was now found in nearly every county seat. By 1880 it could be written of Indiana Methodism (and this statement was typical of all the more settled areas): "Now the finest and most costly Protestant churches in our chief towns are those owned and occupied by the Methodists; their steeples are as high, and their bells as numerous and rich toned as any; it is evident that the Methodists are investing more money in church building than the members of any church among us."

At the time, however, when costly Methodist churches were being erected in the larger cities and the log cabin churches were disappearing in most parts of "The Old West," a new frontier came into existence in the Far West and Northwest. The Homestead Act of 1862 gave free land to settlers, and in 1869 the Union Pacific, the first transcontinental line, was completed, followed by the building of other railroads to the Pacific Coast. Thousands of settlers entered the new western country, among them being many European immigrants. Settlements, villages, even cities sprang up as if by magic. Between 1864 and 1890 nine new states were admitted into the Union: Nevada, 1864; Nebraska, 1866; Colorado, 1876; North Dakota, 1889; South Dakota, 1889; Montana, 1889; Washington, 1889; Idaho, 1890; Wyoming, 1890.

This rapid development of the Far West brought a new task to Methodism. There was a conviction that, just as the circuit riders had followed the pioneers across the Allegheny Mountains into the Ohio and Mississippi valleys, Methodism should in like manner carry the gospel to the new frontier. This new field called forth home missionary activity. The Western congregations began to call upon the older and wealthier sections of Methodism for financial aid, especially for the erection of church buildings. The settlement of the Far West during and after the Civil War gave to Methodism a unique opportunity and made possible a glorious epoch of Methodist church extension.

One factor favoring a connectional program of church extension was the haphazard methods followed by churches in seeking assistance. Local churches without funds to erect houses of worship sent their pastors or agents into other churches and conferences seeking help. Wealthy congregations were constantly being solicited by distant churches. The appeal followed no systematic plan; it was carried out in a manner much like that in which the mythical soldier said his battalion entered

the battle: "We went into it promiscus." As early as 1841 the New Jersey Conference had declared that the practice of having agents go through the conference begging funds was a bad policy, "an unmixed evil, reducing our people to the degraded condition of religious mendicants, and is seriously injuring the character and influence of Methodism."

The absence of the pastors while soliciting funds had a bad effect upon the local churches. One pastor, H. D. Fisher, made a trip from Kansas to the Atlantic Coast begging money for his church. He wrote of his experience as follows: "After having spent more than six months of incessant toil and labor in preaching and begging, I at last made my way homeward to my wife and dear boys, who had been well for the most of the time, but had had a very hard battle with poverty. I found services had been suspended during my absence, the congregation scattered, and matters in a state of general disorganization." In days of slow transportation this experience was typical of the loss of time, labor, and efficiency in making personal solicitations. The Upper Iowa Conference in 1864 declared that the custom of sending agents to travel and beg for money deprived churches of their pastors for a large portion of the year and resulted in comparatively little profit to the church.

Such solicitation sometimes led to the defrauding of loyal Methodist congregations by persons posing as preachers from distant areas. The bishops and General Conference felt compelled to urge the churches to inquire carefully into the authority of all traveling solicitors.

The Upper Iowa Conference has the honor of having initiated church extension in an annual conference and securing the organization of a connectional church extension agency. At the outbreak of the Civil War the Upper Iowa Conference found that twelve of its churches were hopelessly in debt, their members scattered and discouraged, mortgages past due, foreclosures

in prospect. The conference organized a church extension society, and a young preacher, A. J. Kynett, was made corresponding secretary and agent with instructions to save the churches if possible. He did his work so efficiently that at the following session he was able to report that "by the favor of God and liberality of our people, all the old debts have been removed." He reminded the conference, however, that "but for our timely organization, and the earnest efforts of all concerned, that which was a year ago an impending danger would have been today actual calamity."

From his experience in the Upper Iowa Conference Kynett conceived a wider vision of the needs of the church in Iowa and the Middle West. He saw that evangelism was not the sole need of the new communities that were springing up like magic, for many of the new settlers were nominally Christian. For them the erection of houses of worship was a chief need. At the General Conference of 1864 he and other delegates from the Upper Iowa Conference made a definite proposal for a connectional church extension agency. Kynett guided the proposed legislation through the General Conference and helped prepare the constitution for the Church Extension Society. By this and subsequent contributions Kynett became recognized as the founder of church extension in American Methodism.

The General Conference of 1864 declared that America, and especially the new frontier in the West, would soon, because of immigration and industry, "bud and blossom as the rose" and that Methodism should keep pace with this progress. It was asserted that Methodism had always been the first to preach the gospel in the cabin and schoolhouse, and must now be first in erecting houses of worship to establish Methodism permanently in every growing village, town, and city. It was held that the weaker portions of the church could not be left alone to build up and establish what was essentially a part of the common cause

of Methodism; that the interests involved were those of the whole church and constituted a connectional matter. The report further stated that "we are not wholly insensible to the difficulties which beset an enterprise of such magnitude; but happily the end proposed is so essentially missionary in every feature, that we may avail ourselves of the experience and plans of the church in her missionary labors."

The General Conference provided for the organization of the Church Extension Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, to extend and establish Christian influence throughout the United States and territories by aiding in securing suitable houses of worship and such other church property as might promote this general design. The Society was to be composed of any who contributed the sum of one dollar per year. All such contributors were eligible to vote in the election of managers of the Society.

The action of 1864 created a Society which was unwieldy, for few contributors could attend the annual meetings. It was soon realized that a closer relationship between the Church and the Society was needed. At the General Conference of 1872 the Society became an official Board of the Church, the managers being elected by the General Conference and under its immediate control. The name was changed to the Board of Church Extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Thirty-two years later, at the General Conference of 1904, the work of home missions and church extension was united, and the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension came into existence in 1907. To this Board was committed "all the mission work of the Church in the United States, and the work of church extension." In 1916, to afford more effective supervision for the work of the Board, provision was made for five departments—namely, Church Extension, City Work, Rural Work, Frontier Work, and Evangelism. From its beginning

in 1864 to 1940 the headquarters of the Board were located in Philadelphia. For the sake of convenience this agency for church extension will be hereafter referred to in this book as the Northern Board.

The funds for church extension were to be derived from collections in the local congregations, private donations, bequests, and annuities. The *Discipline* instructed each Methodist pastor to preach an annual sermon on church extension and to take a collection in each congregation.

The first secretary of the Church Extension Society was Samuel Y. Monroe, but upon his death in 1867 he was succeeded by A. J. Kynett. Kynett's love for the cause and his exceptional business sagacity made him for thirty-three years a remarkable leader of church extension. In 1884 the bishops in praising Kynett's leadership declared that "its integrity defies the scrutiny and the criticism of the most captious."

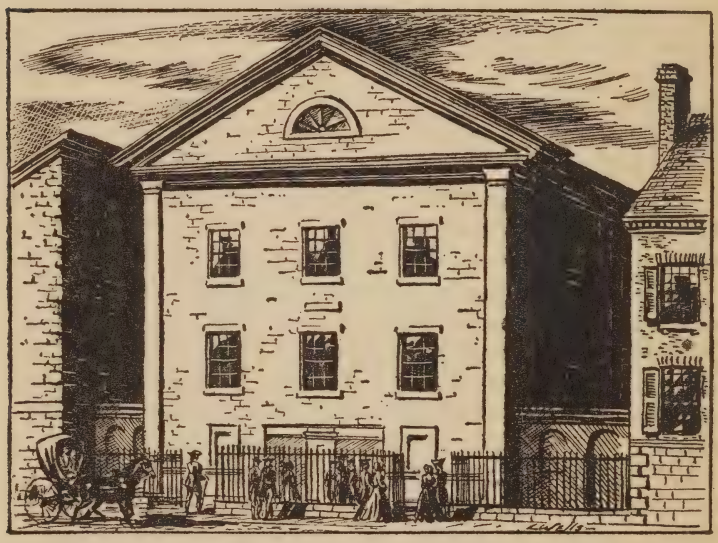
Kynett died in office on February 23, 1899, after having collected and disbursed for church extension six and one-half million dollars and having granted aid to 11,000 churches. This was a marvelous record. He found the treasury of the Society bankrupt in 1867, but left the Board in 1899, as stated by Bishop McCabe, "with a church-building power of twelve churches for every week of the rolling year."

Kynett was ably assisted by Charles C. McCabe, who became assistant secretary of the Church Extension Society in 1868 and remained in that office until 1884. A native of Ohio, he had entered the Methodist ministry in 1860. During the Civil War he served as chaplain in the Federal Army. In 1863 he was captured and for five months was a prisoner in Libby Prison, at Richmond.

The results showed that no better choice could have been made than that of McCabe to be the traveling representative of the Board. By song and sermon he popularized the cause of

church extension, and by his contagious enthusiasm he won the confidence of thousands and thus secured large contributions.

The success of McCabe may be attributed in part to his ability as a singer. The announcement that Chaplain McCabe would sing brought large audiences to his meetings. Halford E. Luccock says of him: "He was not a professional singer, though he sang practically all of his life and was known and



ST. GEORGE'S METHODIST CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA
This is the oldest Methodist house of worship in America. It was purchased in 1769 and with the exception of a brief period during the American Revolution has been in continuous use to the present time.

loved throughout the entire country for his singing. There was a charm in his voice which went beyond the technique of training. It was a baritone voice of strange, plaintive sweetness; it had a thrilling power, a moving spiritual quality of a rare sort."

McCabe made use of his Civil War experiences to aid church extension. He prepared an addess on his experiences in Libby Prison. Concerning this McCabe wrote: "Many a time when the pastor of a church would have announced that I would speak on church extension or the missionary cause when we needed money I have said to him, 'Announce that I will lecture on "The Bright Side of Life in Libby Prison." ' And then how the people would turn out! I talked to them of Libby Prison and then of church extension. I let them in free and charged them for going out. Many and many a time they paid a thousand dollars to go out." McCabe estimated that by this method alone he raised $150,000 for churches, parsonages, and needy preachers.

Another example of his magnetic leadership is described in the following letter from a pastor to the Board: "Your Assistant Secretary, Chaplain McCabe, came to Kansas a few years ago. We had a little, struggling church and no parsonage. Notwithstanding, I said, 'Chaplain, give us a lecture. We can go to the courthouse. We will charge twenty-five cents. Then we can propose raising money enough to build a church.' We cleared $150 out of the lecture. Then we presented this church interest. Chaplain McCabe managed the matter. He promised $250. We raised $1,200 for the commencement and built a beautiful church that will seat 500 people, the best situated church in the state of Kansas. We have an excellent parsonage now of seven rooms."

In his famous reply to Robert G. Ingersoll, in 1882, McCabe thrilled the church with a new enthusiasm for church extension. In an address before a group of Freethinkers, Ingersoll prophesied the early collapse of Christianity and said, "The churches are dying out all over the land; they are struck with death." This sentence was quoted in the newspapers and Chaplain McCabe saw it while traveling by railroad. At the next station he sent a telegram to Ingersoll. It read as follows:

"Dear Robert: 'All hail the power of Jesus' name.' We are building more than one Methodist church for every day in the year and propose to make it two a day. C. C. McCabe."

The telegram electrified the church and the following song was written by Alfred J. Hough:

The infidels, a motley band,
In council met, and said:
The churches die all through the land,
The last will soon be dead.
When suddenly a message came,
It filled them with dismay;
"All hail the power of Jesus' name!"
We're building two a day.

The King of Saints to war has gone,
And matchless are his deeds;
His sacramental hosts move on,
And follow where he leads;
While infidels his church defame
Her cornerstones we lay;
"All hail the power of Jesus' name!"
We're building two a day.

"Extend," along the line is heard,
"Thy walls, O Zion fair!"
And Methodism heeds the word
And answers ev'rywhere.
A new church greets the morning's flame,
Another evening's ray,
"All hail the power of Jesus' name!"
We're building two a day.

When infidels in council meet
Next year, with boastings vain,
To chronicle the Lord's defeat,
And count his churches slain,
O may we then with joy proclaim
If we his call obey:
"All hail the power of Jesus' name!"
We're building three a day.

This song was sung across the continent by Chaplain McCabe and in Sunday schools and church services. It helped to put a crusading spirit into the church extension cause. McCabe declared that the Methodists must erect through the medium of loans alone one thousand churches on the frontier every five years. "Of course we can," declared McCabe. "Give it to us and we will set a thousand church bells ringing all along the frontier line. Give it to us and we will add 300,000 people to your great Methodist army every time the financial wheel makes a revolution every five years."

While Kynett and McCabe were leading in church extension in the Methodist Episcopal Church, events were causing the Southern Methodists to become interested. As in the case of the Northern Methodists, it was the frontier that awakened this interest. During and after the Civil War many Southern Methodists, hoping to regain their lost fortunes, migrated to the Northwest. Outstanding clergymen like E. J. Stanley and L. B. Stateler left Missouri, going first to Colorado and then to Montana. Annual conferences were organized in these regions, the Columbia Conference in 1866, Denver in 1873, and Montana in 1878. Southern Methodist leaders in these sections soon appealed to the mother church for missionary aid. As a result, the bishops in 1876 sent David Morton, a Kentucky preacher, to study the needs in the Northwest and to make recommendations as to the policy of Southern Methodism in that area. Morton served for one year as pastor at Helena, Montana, and presiding elder of that region.

David Morton returned from Montana convinced that one of the greatest needs in Southern Methodism was the building of churches in the West and Northwest to house the homeless congregations. He contended that this was imperative if there were to be permanent results from the sacrificial work of the preachers. He showed that the people were struggling for

economic existence and were too poor to erect churches; that some groups were meeting in private homes, but that they could not influence the community and, if left without church buildings, would disintegrate. This situation, he held, could be remedied only by a connectional church building enterprise.

As H. M. King has said, Morton "really became obsessed with his subject and thoroughly convinced that it was his duty to promote it by all possible means." While serving as pastor at Elkton, Kentucky, and as presiding elder of the Louisville District, Morton kept the subject before the church by letters, articles, and addresses. He was fortunate in winning the support of Bishop H. N. McTyeire.

When the General Conference of 1882 assembled there were memorials before it in favor of a connectional church extension program from the Montana, Denver, Louisiana, Mississippi, and North Carolina Conferences. It was reported that the Montana Conference had already formed a conference Board. The bishops in their episcopal address recommended the establishment of a Board of Church Extension. They declared: "An organization without complex machinery, simple but efficient, and of connectional extent, by which the strong could help the weak in the work of church extension, would meet a want that has found a general expression among our people."

The General Conference of 1882 adopted the recommendation and organized the Board of Church Extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. For the sake of convenience it will be hereafter referred to as the Southern Board. A charter was granted by the legislature of Kentucky and headquarters were established at Louisville. David Morton was selected as the first secretary.

This proved to be a wise choice for the secretaryship. Morton lived up to the appraisal once made of him: "If you want a man that can go on a bare rock and raise a crop without

seed or soil, David Morton is the man. He has money sense and Methodist religion." It was fortunate that he had money sense, for he had nothing but the authority of the Church with which to begin. No funds would be available until the close of the conference year, and much doubt was felt about the success of the enterprise. For one year Morton was forced to exist upon what he could raise in special collections.

Morton set the pace for the Board of Church Extension during his first year in office. In his first annual report he stated that he had visited twenty-one annual conferences, traveled 20,000 miles in twenty-one states, two territories, the District of Columbia, and the Republic of Mexico, and had seen nearly all the country occupied by Southern Methodism except the Pacific slope. For sixteen years he continued this heavy traveling schedule, usually visiting nearly every annual conference each year. He did everything else in the same proportion. He never had any regular office hours, but rose early and worked late into the night. His capacity for steady, grinding labor was enormous.

In order to have more funds for church extension Morton practiced the strictest economy. On his long trips he carried lunches prepared by Mrs. Morton; his lunch basket was large enough to contain a home-cured ham and other food. He practiced a similar economy in other phases of his work. He slept in day coaches on trains, using a rubber air pillow and a blanket shawl. For six years the cost of operating his office did not exceed $12.50 per month, and the furniture purchased for the office between 1882 and 1890, including a typewriter, cost only $450. He even made use of discarded envelopes, which he split open and used as memoranda paper.

For sixteen years David Morton gave inspiring leadership to the cause of church extension in Southern Methodism. When he died in office, in 1898, he had aided 3,817 churches in the

sum of $947,294 and 604 parsonages to the amount of $84,685, a total of $1,031,979. During the last quadrennium (1894-1898) of his administration Southern Methodist churches were built at the rate of 6½ per week, or more than one for each working day.

Upon the death of Dr. Morton, on March 9, 1898, there were many tributes paid to his leadership in church extension. The Board of Church Extension declared: "What church extension is among us, he made it. . . . . The history of the Church cannot be written without giving a large place to him, and the history of the first sixteen years of our church extension work is simply his history." In like manner his biographer, Bishop E. E. Hoss, asserted, "What our church extension work is, David Morton made it."

Much church extension work was done by the former Methodist Protestant Church, although no special Board was set up for the purpose. The general supervision of church extension was handled by the missionary agencies. In addition to the general board there were Boards of Missions and Church Extension in most of the annual conferences. In 1940 it was reported that the Board of Missions had aided in the organization of churches in twenty-four states and in every annual conference. The report further stated: "In many cases the aid given has saved churches from failure and in others brought encouragement and inspiration resulting in such missions growing into flourishing congregations with splendid church edifices. These have not only ministered to their local communities, but have contributed to the support of the missionary, educational, and other institutions of the denomination. It is not possible to estimate the full results of the Board's achievement in the money given or the churches assisted. Its efforts and influence far exceed any mathematical calculation that might be made for the denomination or for our Lord's kingdom." In 1939, the

Methodist Protestant Church had 2,100 houses of worship, valued at $7,306,654, and 758 parsonages, valued at $2,642,750.

Although the direction of church extension has always been the province of the general Boards, yet from the beginning the annual conferences have participated in the program. In the Methodist Episcopal Church there was an annual conference Board auxiliary to the parent Board, the function of which was to examine all applications for aid from within the conference, to recommend meritorious cases to the general Board, to allocate the quotas to be raised in the churches, and to aid in securing these funds.

The annual conferences in Southern Methodism played a larger role, because a portion of the collections for church extension in the annual conferences was dispensed by the conference Boards. These conference Boards appropriated money directly to enterprises within their own bounds, but worked in closest harmony and co-operation with the general Board, reporting their operations and expenditures. The conference Boards established loan funds, which they entrusted to the general Board for investment and administration, the conference Boards making the actual appropriations. They worked within their own bounds; the general Board disregarded conference lines and gave aid wherever it was most needed.

Attempts were made to create city Boards of Church Extension. Authority for such bodies was granted by the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1894. It was hoped that local Methodists would combine their resources for the building of Methodist churches in the neglected parts of the large cities. Although some such Boards functioned, church extension work in the large cities has often been handled in a haphazard manner.

Although some questions were raised about the use of connectional funds for church extension, yet for the large majority

of Methodists church extension was a missionary project. Their enthusiasm was shown by the use of the slogan "millions for church buildings, to be expended in darkest America." It was asserted that it would not be long until the sound of Methodist hammers would be heard around the world. Contributors to church extension were told that in a double sense they were "builders with God."

The church extension program has always had a missionary aspect. The Southern Methodist bishops declared in 1882 that the principle of church extension was "that the strong should help the weak," and that there should be aid "for feeble societies in new settlements, thus occupying new stations." The following statement concerning the missionary aspect of church extension is very true: "Yet the work, at first sight, seems to deal with brick and stone and mortar and wood and we are apt to stop there in our thoughts, with the simple idea of church buildings, of putting up structures, forgetting that this is only a means to an end, that it is as really and essentially missionary as is the work of the missionary society. We must get beyond the point of looking simply at the wood and brick and stone and must comprehend the missionary idea that lies at the heart of this great organization."

The missionary aspect of church extension was further emphasized by the decision of the Boards to use the funds primarily for churches in remote and destitute sections of the country, and especially for those congregations which could not build without aid. For many years the Boards refused to grant aid to a church that cost more than $10,000, except under the most extraordinary circumstances. It was held that congregations desiring a more expensive church should pay for it. It was felt that churches ambitious to erect expensive structures should not cripple the work of the Boards in helping to bring into existence modest churches. It would have been impossible

to enlist generous contributions to aid churches costing more than those in which the donors themselves worshipped. The majority of all church extension funds in Methodism have gone to the smaller and struggling congregations.

Although the church extension program began as a home missionary project, the Boards have been of great assistance in erecting houses of worship in foreign countries. The Northern Board has never entered the foreign mission fields, but has aided churches in outlying United States possessions such as Puerto Rico, the Hawaiian Islands, Alaska, and the Panama Canal Zone, and in Santo Domingo. The Southern Board, on the other hand, has made appropriations in Cuba, Brazil, Mexico, China, Japan, and Korea. Many Methodist laymen have donated funds for memorial churches in foreign lands. There has always been co-operation between the Boards of Church Extension and the Boards of Missions.

Although aid was granted to struggling churches in all sections of America, most of the assistance furnished prior to 1900 by all branches of American Methodism went to the needy communities of the western frontier. In 1906 the Southern secretary reported that, while two-thirds of the money from the beginning had been contributed by annual conferences east of the Mississippi, nearly two-thirds of it had been expended in the West and Southwest.

In order to meet the growing demands for help in the West, the Northern Board set up a special division on Frontier Work, which included the present states of Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, North Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. In 1880 it approved a plan to raise $100,000, in addition to the regular funds of the Board, to build four hundred new churches on the frontier.

Chaplain McCabe assumed the leadership of this frontier work and called upon the established churches in the North and

East, upon laymen and Sunday schools, to extend their influence by erecting church edifices on the frontier. McCabe guaranteed that for $250 he could bring about the erection of a church worth not less than $1,250. The frontier congregation receiving the donation was required to build a new church on approved plans, and could not use the donated fund to pay debts or enlarge and beautify an old church.

By 1908 the number of new churches erected under this program had reached nine hundred. One layman in New York had by 1904 given the funds for forty churches, all of which were erected in North and South Dakota. Of 329 frontier churches erected by 1883 the average value was $2,000 instead of the required $1,250.

Most of these frontier churches were simple wooden buildings. It was, however, by means of these edifices that the Methodists were able to follow the immigrants and frontiersmen into mining towns, logging camps, lumber mill communities, and the great agricultural areas of the Far West. The service rendered by these frontier churches was not temporary, for from many of these plain wooden structures have evolved large churches costing fifty or one hundred times as much as the building which cradled the group in infancy.

No special policy for western work was adopted by the Southern Board, but nearly all the Southern Methodist churches in the Northwest were aided, including the more substantial houses of worship in such centers as Denver, Portland, and Seattle.

The most conspicuously valuable frontier work of the Southern Board was done in the Indian Territory, which in 1907 was admitted into the Union as the State of Oklahoma. Even before Oklahoma was opened to white settlement assistance had been given to churches in that area. When people began to pour into the State by the thousands, it was asserted by the sec-

retary of the Board, in 1907, that no such condition had ever before confronted the Southern Methodist Church. It was pointed out that many of those entering Oklahoma were possessed of small means, unable to help build houses of worship; but that they would be likely to prosper and in many cases grow rich. W. F. McMurry was put in charge of the work in Oklahoma. Not only were funds given, but advice was furnished in selecting locations in strategic places. By 1909, 385 Southern Methodist churches had been aided by church extension funds. Many of these are now large and thriving churches, which have repaid the church for the original gift or loan a thousandfold.

The success of the special frontier projects caused the Northern Board in 1890 to enter upon a special building program for the mountain areas. This enterprise was planned at first for the mountain regions of the central South, but was extended to other sections. For these mountain churches a special gift of only $100 was required, and the churches erected cost $600 or more. By 1898 ninety churches had been built by special gifts of $100 each. Many of these were built in such out-of-the-way and backward places that even the small amount contributed procured buildings that were the best in the neighborhood.

When the church extension program had been in operation only a few years it was discovered that the funds made available from annual collections from the churches would be insufficient. A. G. Kynett developed the idea of a loan fund. In this he followed a good Methodist tradition, for the Foundry, the first Methodist chapel in London, had been leased and repaired on borrowed money. As early as 1816 the English Methodists had created the Chapel Fund Committee which directed the work of church extension. A loan fund had been gradually developed until in 1876 it amounted to $300,000 and

had proved to be one of the most efficient means of assisting in church extension among the Wesleyan Methodists.

The Upper Iowa Conference, which had always been active in church extension, had by 1866 created a conference loan fund. The first subscription of $11,000 was made by Hiram Price, then a member of Congress from Iowa and later United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Kynett, as a member of the Upper Iowa Conference, had participated in the founding of the conference loan fund, and when in 1867 he became Secretary of the Board of Church Extension he proposed a similar fund for the entire church.

The Board of Church Extension in 1867 approved the plan, and at the General Conference of 1868 it was incorporated into the charter. The reasons set forth for the founding of the loan fund were the magnitude and importance of the work to be done; the receipts from the annual collections had proved wholly inadequate; and it was felt that in many cases a temporary loan would meet the emergency and accomplish the desired end as effectively as a donation. It was further pointed out that the loan fund was intended to supplement, not supplant, the annual collections.

For such reasons Methodists were invited to make special contributions to the loan fund. No part of the fund was ever to be donated for any purpose or used for current expenses, but it was to be loaned to churches, in sums not exceeding five thousand dollars.

A loan fund plan was early adopted by the Board of Church Extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Even before the founding of the Board, in 1882, Dr. Morton had come to the conclusion that a loan fund was necessary. Shortly after the organization of the Southern Board, James Garland Carter, a prominent layman of Louisville, proposed that the Board adopt the loan fund feature, which was done.

Provision was made for the creation of special or memorial loan funds. The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1868 declared that "five thousand dollars or more, contributed at one time, shall constitute a separate loan fund which shall bear the name of the contributor, or such name as he shall designate." In 1884 the Southern Board also decided that sums of five thousand dollars or more might constitute separate loan funds and be named by the donors. These funds became popularly known as "living monuments." The preachers were urged in both Northern and Southern Methodism to invite private contributions and bequests to these funds.

The wisdom of the decision to create such funds in honor of Methodist leaders and benefactors has been demonstrated by its success. The Monroe Loan Fund, created in November, 1867, in memory of Samuel Y. Monroe, the first secretary of the Northern Board, was the initial fund in the Methodist Episcopal Church; the first in Southern Methodism was established in honor of Bishop H. H. Kavanaugh. Another sacred memorial loan fund in Southern Methodism was created by L. B. Stateler out of funds saved by his wife, who, while her husband was serving as a pioneer preacher in Montana, cared for a herd of cattle which she and her husband had driven to that state from Colorado. By 1940 there were 243 such special loan funds in Southern Methodism.

The loan fund has appealed to American Methodists. By 1940 the loan fund of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, had grown to $3,249,218.24, and that of the Methodist Episcopal Church to $7,012,200.98. During the first ten years of the secretaryship of T. D. Ellis, 1922-1932, $1,167,426.60 was added to the loan fund capital of Southern Methodism. The first large gift to the loan fund of the Methodist Episcopal Church, made by David McWilliams, of Dwight, Illinois, had

by 1903 aided in building seventy-seven churches valued at $171,000 and seating 18,475 people, the total amount of loans being $23,950. In 1940 the Northern Board reported that, since the establishment of the fund, there had been loans negotiated amounting to $10,235,000.

Many values attach to the loan fund plan. It has taken the place of donations where, in view of the prospect of future strength, the churches need only a temporary accommodation. Many churches cannot secure loans in other quarters. As loans are repaid the fund becomes a self-replenishing reservoir. Through constant accumulation of interest and added contributions these loan funds are ever increasing. By a process of evolution they carry their benefits to churches that need assistance, return with added power, to go forth again bearing larger benefits. In contrast to some donations, loans do not foster in the recipients a spirit of dependence, disastrous to that self-respect so necessary to a strong spirituality.

In 1868 Bishop Calvin Kingsley made the following statement: "I am exceedingly well pleased with the Loan Fund feature of the Society, and, if it had pleased God to put into my hands property that I could give to benevolent institutions, I can think of nothing that impresses me more favorably, or as favorably, as putting money into this Loan Fund, to go on repeating itself, and reproducing its blessings from age to age. It does not stop simply with the first blessing. It helps build one church and comes back again with the glad tidings of what it has done, and goes again and builds, or helps to build, another church, and coming back says, 'Here am I, send me'; and goes again and again. There is something exceedingly beautiful to me in it; and I think when it gets fully before the business men of the church, many of whom have learned to be benevolent in the Sunday school, and are making it a prayer-

ful study to do business for the Lord, they will turn with special favor to this Fund."

In order to make the loan fund more flexible, the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1924 authorized a Revolving Loan Fund. This made it possible to consider a class of distinctly home missionary projects which were not considered good commercial investment risks. From this Revolving Fund loans could be made for a limited period at nominal interest, and without repayment of any part of the principal during the period of the loan. This plan has been used especially for building in communities where the need for aid was temporary. In 1926 the Southern Board also established a fund of a similar nature.

The Revolving Loan Fund has proved of great value. It has saved projects whose missionary character made them eligible for such loans even though there was already a first mortgage on the property. The loans have been of much help in the erection of chapels where strong congregations would probably soon come into existence, and where the need was only temporary. By 1929 the Northern Board had made Revolving Fund Loans to the amount of $1,064,689.33, which signified that the Board had donated in interest to the local churches approximately $53,000 per annum.

It is impossible to record here all the statistics concerning church extension, but the results have been stupendous. A large majority of the Methodist churches in America have received donations or loans from the various church extension agencies. In 1939 there were 16,340 houses of worship in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and of this number, 13,060 had been aided by the General and Conference Boards of Church Extension.

In 1940 the Southern Board reported that during the fifty-eight years of its history, it had administrated, through the

General and Conference Boards, $9,349,267 in donations and $10,906,479 in loans, a total investment in churches and parsonages of $20,255,746. The number of churches aided was 13,677 and the number of parsonages 4,324.

By 1940 the Northern Board had aided by loans and donations

BARRATT'S CHAPEL, KENT COUNTY, DELAWARE

One of the few remaining pre-Revolutionary Methodist churches, erected in 1780. The first celebration of the Lord's Supper in America by an ordained Methodist preacher occurred here. It is still in use.

24,000 church building projects. The sum of $22,500,000 had been donated and $10,235,000 had been loaned by the Board from 1864 to 1940.

This aid granted through the church extension agencies has made possible a great church-building era in Methodism. When the Northern Board was organized in 1864 there were 9,430

churches in the Methodist Episcopal Church; in 1908 there were 29,523, a gain of 20,093. Thus in forty-four years the Methodist Episcopal Church built more than twice as many churches as had been erected in the previous century. Between 1870 and 1879 there were 7,000 churches erected. Such an accomplishment would have been impossible without the impetus of the church extension program.

It is often difficult to understand or appreciate the significance of statistics such as those offered in the above paragraphs. The following description of an episcopal trip in the West made by Bishop E. G. Andrews in 1878 gives a more vivid picture: "I set out on the 15th of last July for a western tour, from my home in Des Moines, Iowa. I traveled about six or seven hours, and came to a large town, where I preached in an edifice built by the aid of the Board of Church Extension. Thence farther west to Fremont, Nebraska, and preached in another church helped by this Board. Took the cars the next day and went on farther and struck off into the country and dedicated a church also built by the help of the Board of Church Extension. I resumed the cars and rode to Ogden, and there preached in a church built by the Board of Church Extension. I took the narrow gauge road and went into Idaho and Montana, and preached in churches helped by this Board. I attended conference in Virginia City, Montana, in a church helped by the Board. Went to California, and passed up into Oregon, and attended conference in a church which was originated and looked after by the assistant corresponding secretary of the Board. It is now complete, and it is a very attractive edifice. I went up into Washington Territory, and reached Walla Walla on a Saturday morning and spent the day and part of the next, preaching in a church that had been helped by the Board. In Columbia River Conference, I preached in a church built by the aid of the Board. On my return towards

the east, I stopped at Salt Lake City. Have you ever heard of Salt Lake City? Well, there is a Methodist church there, and it has been helped by this Board, and by its assistant corresponding secretary. You have no idea how churches have been aided by the Board of Church Extension. I have seen something of its work, and I commend it to you."

The success of church extension in all three branches of Methodism is to a large degree due to the excellent leadership of the executive secretaries. Mention has already been made of the contributions of Kynett, McCabe, and Morton.

Contributions have been made by many leaders, but the names of at least two others should appear here.

In the Methodist Episcopal Church Dr. David D. Forsyth was Corresponding Secretary of the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension from 1916 to 1926. Widely known as one of the greatest home mission administrators in America, he was largely responsible for the development of the total program of the Board. In the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Dr. W. F. McMurry, who became a bishop in 1918, rendered conspicuous service as Church Extension Secretary. During the twelve years of his administration the Board became one of the outstanding administrative agencies of the Southern Church, the Loan Fund was greatly increased, and every section of its service was multiplied.

At the time of Methodist unification the secretaries in charge of Church Extension were T. D. Ellis, Methodist Episcopal Church, South; E. D. Kohlstedt and F. W. Mueller, Methodist Episcopal Church; and G. W. Haddaway, Methodist Protestant Church.

CHAPTER IV

CHURCH EXTENSION EXPANDING

At the close of the World War an impetus was given to church extension by the Missionary Centenary Movement. In 1919 various branches of Methodism joined in celebrating the centennial of Methodist missions. The first Missionary Society was organized in 1819 as a result of the work of John Stewart, a Negro, among the Wyandotte Indians in Ohio, and the celebration took the form of a great financial campaign to raise millions of dollars for missions and related causes.

Methodism had already observed two centenary occasions, and in both cases the church building enterprise had been accentuated. In 1866 the Methodist Episcopal Church celebrated the one hundredth anniversary of the introduction of Methodism into America, and in 1884 occurred the celebration of the centennial of the Christmas Conference. A campaign to strengthen Methodist institutions was promoted in connection with each, and many new churches were erected. All over the country today there are Centenary Methodist churches which derive their names from one of these historic observances. But the results of these were small in comparison with the building era that came during and after the Missionary Centenary of 1919.

The Centenary will always be recognized as one of the most remarkable periods of advance in the history of American Methodism. With a liberality previously unexcelled, Methodist clergymen and laymen made large contributions to the Centenary Movement. The sum of $37,000,000 was subscribed by

the Southern Church, and the Church in the North pledged $113,000,000.

A portion of the Centenary funds was allocated to church extension, and there was a great forward movement in church building. The enthusiasm aroused by the campaign caused the revival of old building projects and the beginning of new ventures, as the Boards were able to increase their assistance to needy churches. By 1924 the Southern Board had received $1,332,650 from Centenary funds. Between 1920 and 1924 the Northern Board aided, on an average, 869 churches annually; only on one or two previous occasions had this Board aided as many as 300 projects in a single year. In 1920 the *New York Christian Advocate* declared, "It is impossible to keep pace with Methodism's building operations these days."

In the meantime the work of the Boards had expanded. The connectional church extension program had been inaugurated in the North in 1864 and in the South in 1882, for the exclusive purpose of aiding needy congregations in building houses of worship. As the movement progressed, however, new avenues of service appeared and the Boards found it necessary to broaden their work and undertake activities which had not previously been contemplated. Among these new elements of the modern church extension program may be mentioned the erection of parsonages, emergency aid, architectural service, finance and debt raising, and the building of churches for Negro Methodists.

PARSONAGES. Early in the church extension movement a demand arose for assistance in securing parsonages. In 1885 Bishop R. K. Hargrove, in charge of Southern Methodist work in the Northwest, was forced to abandon several stations because no houses were available for the preachers. Of this condition Bishop Hargrove said: "The need of the gospel in many places is great, but I had not the heart to send men where they

and their families would have to suffer because there is no provision for them." He asserted that parsonages were necessary to the continued success of the Methodist itinerant system and of home missions; and that parsonages for homeless preachers were as essential as churches for homeless congregations.

At this juncture Miss Lucinda B. Helm volunteered her services to the Board of Church Extension. Miss Helm came from a cultured Kentucky home and had been a teacher in the Russellville Female Academy, at Russellville, Kentucky. She declared that "we women ought to come to the front and assist in providing homes for the preachers so much needed to plant the church of Christ in the midst of the people."

The General Conference of 1886 authorized a Woman's Department of the Board of Church Extension, to supply parsonages for itinerant preachers. In 1890 it became a separate organization known as the Woman's Parsonage and Home Mission Society. In 1898 the parsonage work was assigned to the Women's Home Missionary Society. In 1910 it was transferred to the Board of Church Extension.

Miss Helm became the first Secretary of the Woman's Department. She took as her motto, "A parsonage in every charge," and at the end of the first year she had organized thirty-five conference societies. David Morton reported in 1894 that during the first six years of parsonage effort one-half as many parsonages were built as during the preceding one hundred years. In 1939 there were 6,285 parsonages in Southern Methodism. Of these, 4,185 had been aided, through either loans or donations, by the General and Conference Boards of Church Extension to the amount of $1,795,648.92.

The Board of Church Extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church did not undertake parsonage building on a large scale. In 1904 the Board said: "We have aided but few parsonages by donation and not a very large number by loan. The legisla-

tion of the last General Conference is perfectly clear. There is no question as to the legality of the provision. We were hindered in this form of benevolent work solely by lack of funds."

EMERGENCIES. Many emergency appeals came to the Boards from churches which had suffered from earthquakes, hurricanes, fires, tornadoes, floods, and storms. Thus resulted a new type of church extension service.

In September, 1900, the Galveston, Texas, flood caused a large loss of Methodist property. Bishop Warren A. Candler wrote: "As far as now can be estimated twenty-one Methodist churches in the storm-swept district must be rebuilt from the ground up. Thirteen others are badly damaged but can be repaired. The people are not able to rebuild without much aid from the church at large. I have tried to cheer them and I have said to them 'your great church will not forsake you or forget you in your deep sorrow. The solaces of God's house shall be with you.'" A call was immediately issued by the Southern Board for special contributions for this cause and there was a liberal response.

In April, 1906, there occurred the terrible San Francisco earthquake and fire. The Northern Board immediately set apart $25,000 for aid in rebuilding ruined Methodist churches and a call was issued for $250,000. By 1907 the Board had raised $118,660, and by 1912 more than $200,000 had been donated to the destroyed churches.

In September, 1926, the great Florida hurricane destroyed more church property than any other similar disaster that ever occurred in the Southern States. The Boards of Church Extension immediately went to the aid of the distressed congregations, and within a short time the people had places in which to worship and homes for their preachers.

The flood along the Ohio and Mississippi valleys in 1937 damaged a large number of Methodist churches, many of which

were aided with funds secured by special appeals. When the drought struck the Middle West and created the "Dust Bowl,' thousands of families migrated from the drought area, leaving abandoned churches behind and creating a need for new ones in areas to which they migrated. Aid was granted by the Boards, the Northern Board declaring in 1937 that the need would continue until complete readjustment of the population has been made.

The Boards have aided in rebuilding many churches destroyed by fire. Conflagrations constitute a major problem, for it has been estimated that in America five churches are destroyed by fire each day. Many are not insured; in 1919 forty per cent of the church property of Southern Methodism was uninsured, and that forty per cent was the part that could least afford to be unprotected. When churches burned, the helpless congregations invariably appealed to the Board for aid, and it was difficult to deny such pleas.

A constructive policy has been adopted by the Board, which insists that fire insurance be placed upon all churches receiving aid. Pressure has been brought to bear upon the Boards to organize insurance companies exclusively for church property, for the purpose not only of protecting much church property hitherto unprotected, but also of lowering the cost of such protection. After careful investigation the Boards have always declined to set up church insurance companies because of the legal and financial difficulties involved.

ARCHITECTURE. The numerous churches erected during the McCabe era were for the most part "preachers' churches." They were built for the sole purpose of affording a place for the delivery of sermons, and the outstanding consideration was to secure maximum seating capacity at minimum cost. This narrow conception of the function of the meeting house and

the general low economic status of the Methodists resulted in some atrocious structures.

Bishop J. F. Berry once wrote: "If all the grotesque and unsightly church edifices in this country should be burned to the ground at one time there would be a vast conflagration extending from Maine to California. No other class of public buildings has been bungled so generally . . . Many of them are square, overgrown, dry goods boxes to which have been added gables, a central dome and some slender pillars in affectation of something Grecian." Bishop Wilbur P. Thirkield declared that "it is deplorable that over the land there are numbers of misshapen, ramshackle, tasteless church buildings with crude and meaningless decorations without and within; churches formed like theaters; churches with pulpits all askew and in a corner; churches on the model of pagan temples following the pattern set by old churches; churches that require a sign to tell they are not court houses or town houses or public libraries; churches that profane the word, 'Let the beauty of the Lord our God rest upon us.'" Bishop Edwin Holt Hughes recently said that the church of fifty years ago went to the theater for its model and as a result "all over the land we erected circular rooms with the main idea of making the preacher visible and audible. I am sure the conviction now prevails among the most thoughtful and religious people that this excursion into the realm of amphi-theatrical architecture was a spiritual blunder."

With the passing of the frontier period new conceptions of the purpose of the church house arose. There was increasing emphasis upon worship, accompanied by a realization that the architectural form of the average Methodist church was not so designed as to be a real sanctuary for the presence of God. One lady wrote: "The fact that we are Methodists does not annihilate the aesthetic tendency in us. Just because we were born Methodists, are we to be deprived of Gothic arches and the

beneficent symbolism of the ages? Our churches are pitifully bereft of beauty."

The increasing demands for facilities for religious education also influenced the architecture of the churches. Methodists had conducted Sunday schools since 1786, but it was not until after the Civil War that the church became really conscious of its teaching mission. The churches were wholly unadapted to the religious education program, and this fact was the leading consideration in bringing about a changed attitude toward the house of worship. It has been said, "At first the Sunday school was forbidden the use of the church house; then the Sunday school was tolerated in the church house; then in recent years the Sunday school has transformed the church house, so that the modern church building bears scant resemblance to its predecessors of days gone by."

A third factor affecting the old one-room Methodist building was the need for social and recreational facilities. It was felt that the church should provide for the play-life of the young and the Christian fellowship of all believers. Social, play, and club rooms, kitchens, gymnasiums, swimming pools, and other athletic facilities began to be included in church building plans. The modern Methodist church building came to be a composite structure, designed for the three-fold function of preaching and worship, of religious education, and of fellowship and recreation. One observer has said: "Let us consider for a moment the difficult problems which we present to the architect in designing the buildings which will meet our needs. We want a temple for worship, a noble and impressive auditorium. And we want an educational building, offering carefully balanced departments. And we want a community house for social and other ministry."

Church extension leaders early realized the significance of the changes that were affecting the church edifice. Beginning

in 1864, the Northern Board gave attention to architecture in each annual report. In 1875 a Department of Architecture was established and the service of a competent architect was secured. In 1879 the Board decided to decline to furnish aid unless suitable architectural plans had been secured. In 1889 it was decided that no assistance would be granted unless the church plans were approved by the Board. Additional architects were engaged from time to time, and annually a catalogue of architectural plans was furnished free to all applicants.

In 1917 the Board of Church Extension organized, in cooperation with the Sunday School Board, a Bureau of Architecture, with offices at Philadelphia and Chicago. E. M. Conover became the director of the Bureau. Later an Interdenominational Bureau of Architecture was formed with Conover as director.

When the Southern Board was organized Dr. Morton made an arrangement with Dr. Kynett, of the Northern Board, by which architectural plans for churches and parsonages might be secured. In 1917, however, the Southern Board organized a Department of Architecture. Dr. J. A. Baylor was architectural secretary from 1917 until 1924. He was succeeded in 1924 by Dr. H. M. King. This Department has not undertaken to furnish all the architectural service for the churches, but rather to co-operate with local architects and serve in an advisory capacity.

One of the greatest contributions made by the Church Extension Boards has been their influence in elevating architectural standards. Architectural advice to small churches has prevented many mistakes. Building costs have been lowered and modern and useful houses of worship have been erected in many communities.

Officials from the Boards have offered courses on church

building and equipment in training schools for pastors and church school workers. The architectural secretaries visited churches which planned to build or reconstruct. Free architectural plans were often furnished the weaker churches. By these and similar methods the church extension administrative agencies have promoted the evolution of the meeting house into a sanctuary.

In 1925 the Southern Board reported that calls for its architectural service came from all parts of the United States and from Belgium, Cuba, and Czechoslovakia. During the year 1930-1931 the value of church construction with which the Southern Board had some connection was $2,620,686. Between 1920 and 1924 three thousand churches used the service. In 1928 the Northern Bureau won the first prize for $1,000 offered by the *Christian Herald* for the plan of the best church plant erected during the year. It was the design for the Methodist church at Trainor, Pennsylvania. In 1930 the grand prize for the best church plan was awarded to Trinity Methodist Church, at Springfield, Massachusetts.

There has been an attempt to restore worship to its proper place in the Methodist movement. Bishop Wilbur P. Thirkield wrote: "Why build churches in which the canons of taste and beauty are violated? Goodness and truth may be joined with beauty. It was pleasing to God that there was 'lily work on the pillars of the temple.' The hopelessly ugly church is really irreligious, if that is the proper way to express the fact that in many churches not a single religious idea is symbolized. Let us not be afraid of symbolism, warmth, and color that serve to make the presence of the Divine mystical and real. Methodism with its doctrines of the direct witness of the spirit is a mystical religion."

The Gothic spirit has revived in Methodism. The genius of the Gothic is that the house of God is primarily for worship.

It arose in the later Middle Ages, when the cloister was the refuge and home of civilization and the churches were the natural expressions of faith. The altar instead of the pulpit is becoming central. The vertical Gothic lines exhibit the spirit of aspiration, and no other type of architecture connotes so perfectly the spirit of praise, reverence, and devotion. In almost every large city, and even in small towns and rural areas, Gothic Methodist churches have been built since the World War. A member entering Trinity Methodist Church, Springfield, Massachusetts, exclaimed, "I would never have known this was a Methodist church!" The pastor replied, "Thank God for that. We are building something bigger than Methodist churches today; we are building houses of God."

In this development emphasis has been placed upon preserving the vital spirit of Methodism while endeavoring to add dignity to its worship. "We must prove," said one, "that it is possible to save souls in a cathedral as well as a meeting house."

As previously mentioned, religious education has greatly influenced Methodist architecture. One of the first changes came in the adoption of the "Akron Plan." In the early days of Sunday school development John H. Vincent, later a bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church, was asked to give advice as to the development of Sunday school rooms. Vincent's reply was, "Provide for togetherness and separateness. Have a room in which the whole school can be brought together in a moment for simultaneous exercises, and with the minimum of movement be divided into classes for uninterrupted class work."

The "Akron Plan" provided an auditorium which could be used for preaching and also as an assembly room for the Sunday school. Around the assembly room were placed as many class rooms as space permitted. This plan was developed when the Sunday school was regarded as a single unit, all ages assembling for common worship service and using identical lessons. Prog-

ress in religious educational practice, however, has indicated the superiority of a departmental organization and a graded curriculum, and the "Akron Plan" has been outmoded. It would probably not be commended by any authority today.

Experiments in ecclesiastical architecture have been made in response to the modern demand for social, recreational, and institutional facilities. Parlors, banquet halls, sewing rooms, and similar departures are now found in practically all modern Methodist churches. In many large cities the institutional churches in the congested or slum areas resemble great industrial or educational centers. Examples are the notable Churches of All Nations in New York, Boston, and Los Angeles, which carry on large educational, athletic, medical, and general social betterment programs for the underprivileged masses. This whole development has involved architectural modifications.

Another recent feature in Methodist architecture has been the attempt to build "skyscraper" or income-producing church buildings by downtown churches which desire to remain as vital religious factors in community affairs after most of the local members have migrated to the suburbs. These "skyscraper churches" include not only the church, but also stores, offices, apartments, or hotels, from the revenues of which the religious and social work of the congregation is maintained in areas where self-supporting churches can no longer exist.

An outstanding example is the Chicago Temple, in the famous loop section of America's second largest city. It constitutes not only the First Methodist Church of Chicago, but also a great office building. It was erected in 1924 at a cost of $4,600,000. Similar enterprises have been undertaken in San Francisco, Kansas City, Minneapolis, Los Angeles, and New York.

Most of these ventures have met serious financial problems. The Los Angeles church was lost. The Broadway Temple in

New York has never been completed. The "skyscraper church" is still in the experimental stage.

FINANCE AND DEBT RAISING. Church debts have been characteristic of Methodism since its beginning. John Wesley knew the worry of facing the debts on his small English chapels. In 1768 he ascertained that the debt on Methodist chapels amounted to 11,383 pounds and said, "We shall be ruined if we go on thus." He proposed a campaign to liquidate all these debts, but it raised only 7,000 pounds. By 1773 the debts pressed so heavily upon Wesley that he decided to take the burden upon himself and interest rich friends in the cause. He informed a friend that if he really loved him he could show it best by relieving his worries in this regard. Although Wesley gave away $200,000, he died before liquidating the indebtedness on his chapels.

American Methodists have rivalled their English brethren in incurring church debts. There were no debts on the small and inexpensive log cabin churches of the frontier; but as early as 1820 the General Conference, in order to prevent the incurring of debts, ordered that no house of worship should be started until three-fourths of the costs had been secured or subscribed —which legislation was not always obeyed. In the words of Bishop Charles B. Galloway, "We have built churches on faith and paid for them in repentance."

The tragic debt era of Methodism followed the "boom period" after the World War, when many congregations erected large and expensive buildings, financed under the spell of the psychology of the hour. From 1916 to 1926 the debts on American church edifices increased from $165,000,000 to $433,000,000.

Debts on buildings of the Methodist Episcopal Church rose from $17,572,000 in 1920 to $68,781,000 in 1931. Of the churches in this branch of Methodism in 1934, 7,865 were in debt, and 5,000 were described as being in "financial

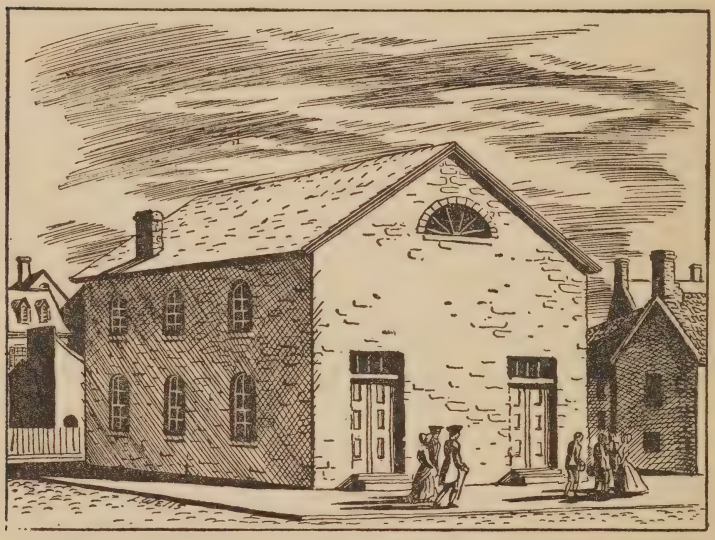
agony." Indebtedness was 15½ per cent of the value of church property. In Southern Methodism debts mounted by 1933 to $23,801,775.

The financial depression of 1929 and after brought trouble to thousands of debt-burdened churches and hampered the missionary, educational, and other benevolent causes. In 1932 it was asserted that Methodists were paying as much interest on debts as they were giving to home and foreign missions.

Some Methodist churches were actually lost. In 1936 it was reported that seventy-two buildings of the Methodist Episcopal Church had been sold for their debts. Dr. H. C. Leonard dramatically described one of the sales: "I did not think it would ever happen—millions of other Methodists did not think it would ever happen—but it did. I saw the sheriff's sign nailed to the door of the Methodist Episcopal Church which bore the name of Asbury. The congregation had borne this name for 150 years. There was a cornerstone testifying to its long history and near by the sale sign under the authority of the sheriff. The auctioneer's red flag hung from one of the art-glass windows and moved slowly as the breeze came quietly down. I heard the bellman of the auctioneer as he walked first on one side of the church and then on the other and again and again he rang the bell. I heard the auctioneer call for the first bid and heard him knock down 'this Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church to the highest bidder.' Then from the steps of the church he went to the parsonage and that was sold, and then to the cemetery and that was sold. Had I not seen and heard it I would not have believed it, but it did happen in this year, 1934, that a Methodist Episcopal congregation lost its sanctuary under the sheriff's hammer." Dr. F. W. Mueller said, "One cannot scan the casualty list of auction-sold sanctuaries without severe heartpangs, as such disasters not only represent a building dedicated to God and man,

for the most supreme service, as lost, but a living, spiritually producing organism has in most instances been annihilated."

In the hour of their financial trial the churches turned to the Church Extension Boards for help. The Northern Board reported to the General Conference of 1936 that "at times, with telegrams, long-distance calls, special messengers, air mail and



LOVELY LANE CHAPEL, BALTIMORE
The Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in this chapel during Christmas week, 1784. The chapel was erected in 1774.

special-delivery letters, individual and committee visitation, and office interviews supplementing our regular (heavy) mail, the combined impact seemed like Niagara's torrents rushing the precipice."

These appeals came when the Boards themselves were suffering from declining incomes; but one of the great achievements

of modern Methodism was the service rendered by the Boards when hundreds of churches faced bankruptcy. In 1929 the Northern Board organized a Division of Finance and Debt Raising to assist debt-encumbered churches. The Southern Board rendered similar aid, and the General Conference of 1936 created a Division of Finance with a full time officer.

The Northern Board promoted a "Save the Sanctuary" movement, and on January 13, 1935, a "Save the Sanctuary" special offering of $130,544.93 was raised; this saved from confiscation property worth $1,965,118, on which rested debts of $860,172. In the hour of crisis many laymen, including Mrs. Henry Pfeiffer and W. S. Pilling, made large gifts to save threatened churches. In 1937 six representatives of the Division of Finance and Debt Raising were engaged in aiding churches in their attempts to save the sanctuaries.

Phenomenal results were brought about by the services of the Boards during the debt crisis. Between 1933 and 1937 the indebtedness on Southern Methodist churches was reduced from $23,801,775 to $16,644,944. In 1936 it was said that "the 'Save the Sanctuary' campaign has literally been a life-saver to scores of Methodist Episcopal churches that did not deserve to die." In 1940 Bishop E. L. Waldorf declared that "during these days of depression our churches in numbers would have been sold and lost except and unless gifts and loans and Division of Finance and Debt Raising leadership had been available." Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam asserted, "I regard the service rendered by the Department of Finance and Debt Raising as one of the major missionary activities of the denomination. Its efficiency eclipses anything in the church." Proof had been furnished that the Church Extension Boards could not only build churches, but could also save them.

Church Extension leaders do not contend that there should be no debts upon growing churches, but urge that debts should not

be such as to cause the congregation to lose spiritual emphasis or to reduce benevolent offerings. The bitter experiences since 1929 should have taught Methodists the necessity of having a financially sound plan of debt payment. The advice given many years ago is still true: "In building, avoid as much as possible, debt, for it is easier to raise one thousand dollars to complete a building, than one hundred to pay off an old debt."

NEGRO WORK. Another contribution of the Boards of Church Extension has been the assistance rendered to Negro Methodists in building their houses of worship. This need did not become important until after the Civil War. Prior to that time the Negro members of both Northern and Southern Methodism worshipped with the white members. During and immediately after the Civil War the Methodist Episcopal Church reentered the Southern states and organized churches and conferences for the freedmen. This necessitated the erection of many new church buildings exclusively for the Negroes. One of the reasons given for the founding of the Northern Board in 1864 was that church extension was indispensable for the success of the work with the Southern Negroes. In 1870 the Negro members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, were organized into the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church. A large number of church buildings were given by Southern Methodists to this new branch of Methodism, but generally speaking, the Negro Methodists in the Southern states began their activities without adequate church buildings.

It was very fortunate that the Negro Methodists had the support of the Boards of Church Extension, for the low economic status of that race after the Civil War made it impossible for them to erect houses of worship. The average Negro church in the South was a mere shack, an unpainted frame structure with rough benches and a crude pulpit. As late as 1900 there

were very few Negro churches in the South that reflected credit upon Methodism. At that time it was reported that there were not more than sixteen Methodist Episcopal churches for Negroes south of the Potomac River that "were more modern than would have been built fifty years" before. In 1925 a secretary of the Northern Board wrote, "When we come to our church property in the Negro conferences we can find no language adequate to picture our poverty and insufficiency." Even these crude structures were often encumbered with debt.

This situation was the more tragic because for the Negro the church building has always served social as well as religious purposes. It was often the only public building available for them. The dilapidated condition of Negro church property not only has been the despair of the membership, but in many places has constituted a disgrace to the community. It has been difficult to stimulate worship and develop qualities of character and culture in the barn-like Negro Methodist churches.

Though most Negro Methodist churches are in the South, the church property problem is acute elsewhere. During and immediately after the World War there was a great migration of Negroes from the South to Northern industrial cities. Many of these were Methodists and new Negro Methodist churches were needed in many Northern centers.

This migration to Northern cities occurred during the Centenary period, when funds were available for church extension. In 1920, $700,000 was spent for 208 new Negro Methodist churches. A total of 700 were erected during the Centenary period. In 1927, 142 out of 481 donations made by the Northern Board were to churches in Negro conferences.

The Negroes suffered as did the white Methodists in the economic depression after 1929. Unfinished churches could not be completed and the debts could not be paid. The sheriff's sign "For Sale" was tacked on many Negro Methodist churches.

Churches large and small suffered foreclosure. Prompt service by the church extension agencies saved many Negro churches, and some of the sanctuaries already sold were redeemed.

The Southern Board worked through the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, which always turned to the Southern Church

OPEN AIR PREACHING

Many Methodist sermons were delivered in the open spaces by the pioneer circuit riders prior to the erection of log cabin churches.

for advice and help on church buildings. Southern white Methodists have helped in the building of nearly every Colored Methodist Episcopal church that has been erected. The General Conference of 1918 authorized the Southern Board to give dollar for dollar on all sums raised for church building through the regular church extension assessments of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church. A small part of the Southern Centenary offering was set aside as a permanent loan fund for church extension in the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church.

CHAPTER V

CHURCH EXTENSION AND THE FUTURE

When the three large branches of American Methodism perfected unification in 1939, all missionary and church extension interests of every kind were merged into a single administrative Board called the Board of Missions and Church Extension. In size and in the extent of its program this is the ranking Board of the church, and one of the greatest administrative organizations ever perfected in the history of the Protestant Church. To form this body the Uniting Conference merged seven existing agencies, namely, the Board of Foreign Missions, the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension, the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, and the Woman's Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church; the Board of Missions and the Board of Church Extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; and the Board of Missions of the Methodist Protestant Church. The administration of Foreign Missions, Home Missions, and Church Extension, both General Work and Woman's Work, was placed under the jurisdiction of the new united Board.

The Board of Missions and Church Extension functions in four divisions, namely, Division of Foreign Missions, Division of Home Missions and Church Extension, Woman's Division of Christian Service, and Joint Division of Education and Cultivation. The names of these Divisions indicate the general nature of the duties devolving upon each. The first three are autonomous and incorporated entities functioning within the framework of the general Board.

The Division of Foreign Missions is charged with the ad-

ministration of the general missionary work of the Church in foreign lands. The Woman's Division of Christian Service functions in three departments, namely, Work in Foreign Fields: Work in the United States, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic; and Christian Social Relations and Local Church Activities. Through the two departments first named the Woman's Division administers both home and foreign missionary work. This differs from the work administered by the so-called "general" Divisions, the Foreign Division and the Divison of Home Missions and Church Extension, in that it is Woman's Work, founded and maintained by the various Woman's Missionary Societies of the contracting denominations, and is specifically for women and children. There is, of course, the fullest understanding and co-operation among the three administrative Divisions.

The Joint Division of Education and Cultivation carries on the work of informing the churches concerning their missionary operations and creating and stimulating the missionary spirit among the people. It is a "joint" Division because it represents all the other Divisions, and has a General Section and a Woman's Section. This Joint Division produces the missionary literature of the Church; promotes missionary institutes, schools of missions, conferences, and other meetings for missionary purposes; creates and supervises the use of materials for visual education; carries on publicity work in connection with the secular and religious press; and in many ways keeps the missionary program of the church constantly before the membership.

In the present connection, special interest attaches to church extension in the united Methodist Church. As previously mentioned, in the former Methodist Episcopal Church, South, there was a separate and independent Board of Church Extension, with headquarters located at Louisville, Kentucky. The Methodist Episcopal Church included church extension along with home

missions in its Board of Home Missions and Church Extension. In the Methodist Protestant Church the same interest was a part of the work of the Board of Missions. The Uniting Conference placed it in the Division of Home Missions and Church Extension of the united Board of Missions and Church Extension.

The Division of Home Missions and Church Extension is divided into two Sections: the Section of Home Missions and the Section of Church Extension. The work of promoting the building of houses of worship is co-ordinate with the administration of home missions. Thus united Methodism indicates the importance that it attaches to this cause.

The activity of the previously existing church extension administrative agencies involved the disbursement of large sums of money, handling and collecting interest and principal on hundreds of loans to churches, investment and reinvestment of millions of dollars, and the protection of permanent trust funds aggregating vast amounts. The legal aspects of all this were exceedingly intricate and the provisions of the charters under which the large church extension assets were held and protected were of primary importance.

The General Conference of 1940 took action locating the new Board of Missions and Church Extension in New York City. The work of securing a charter for this great Board and charters for its three administrative Divisions involved legal entanglements and difficulties of various sorts. In the meantime the old charters under which the various constituent Boards and Societies had been operating were continued in full force and effect. The Church Extension enterprise, therefore, operates for the present in two sections: The Louisville corporation, representing the Board of Missions and Church Extension of the former Methodist Episcopal Church, South, has charge of the work in the Southeastern and South Central Jurisdictions;

the Philadelphia corporation, representing the work of the former Methodist Episcopal Church, administers in the Northeastern, North Central, Western, and Central Jurisdictions. For the present, headquarters for these interests are continued in Philadelphia and Louisville, although the general offices of the Board of Missions and Church Extension are in New York. Veteran Church Extension administrators are in charge of these two corporations. Dr. F. W. Mueller is the Executive Secretary in charge of Church Extension in the Philadelphia corporation, and Dr. T. D. Ellis is the Executive Secretary of the Louisville corporation.

Auxiliary to the Board of Missions and Church Extension, there are similar Boards in each annual conference. The administrative functions of these conference Boards, as set forth in the *Discipline,* are (1) to review, approve, or adjust the askings from the annual conference before they are presented to the general Board, and (2) to raise money, by apportionments to the churches in connection with the regular World Service and benevolence budget, for the support of the annual conference missions and appropriate the same to these projects. In the conference Board both church extension and home missions are included, but church extension is specifically committed to the executive committee or to a special section set up within the Board.

The above statement of the administrative organization of the whole missionary enterprise in united American Methodism indicates the importance of church extension in the thinking of the church.

The connectional church building program began as a movement to meet the needs on the American frontier and has been largely concerned with helping to provide church buildings for congregations in those areas where Methodism was new, weak, and struggling. There is no longer such a geographical fron-

tier, nor is there any considerable geographical area in which the Methodist Church is not relatively strong and influential. This does not mean, however, that the need for church extension activity is no longer existent. Although the frontier, as a geographical area in the process of being opened to settlement, has long since vanished, many other "frontiers" have appeared. From the standpoint of the Christian church there are "frontiers" in every city in the United States and in thousands of other communities. Our mining communities, saw mill camps, textile villages, Negro communities, foreign speaking groups, industrial populations, mountain areas, rural sections, Indian reservations, government projects, fishing and canning populations—these and similar groups and communities constitute the modern American "frontier," all of them bringing to the Methodist Church the challenge of an imperative duty, a thrilling opportunity, and a clamor for the erection of suitable houses for the worship of God. The period of Church Extension activity has not ended.

The Board of Missions and Church Extension of united Methodism declared at its first meeting, in 1940: "Church extension is needed today more than in any day in the history of Methodism. The rapid growth of cities, the spread of populations in downtown sections, the development of industrial plants and populations, the necessity for better church houses in rural communities, the crying need for church facilities among racial groups, all call for increased work of the section of church extension. From every state in the union and our insular possessions, and from every area in our United Methodism come appeals for some type of church extension service which should be made available through our Church Extension and Finance Department activities."

THE RURAL CHURCH. Even a slight acquaintance with the problem of the country church emphasizes the need of

church extension in this field. The programs of most rural Methodist churches are hampered by lack of facilities for educational, social, and recreational activities. This constitutes a serious situation, for the number of rural churches in American Methodism far exceeds that of the urban churches. In the former Methodist Episcopal Church, South, there were approximately 16,000 rural churches, and about 1,600 urban churches.

There are too many one-room Methodist churches in the open country and small communities. In his research regarding the rural church situation in North Carolina, Dr. J. M. Ormond, executive secretary of the rural church section of the Duke Endowment, found in 1929 that of the 5,226 churches of white people in the country and towns, 3,786 were in one-room buildings. It has been said that a one-room house and a cemetery constitute the total physical provisions of many Methodist churches.

In many rural sections the church is lacking in physical equipment. While the average value of the Methodist city church in the South is $58,106, the average value of the churches in the towns and open country is only $4,016. The figure for the average rural Methodist church in the open country is about $2,000. Often the rural church is a blot on the landscape and is not conducive to divine worship. This situation has caused Dr. Ormond to write, "It is hard to explain why good farmers will have pure bred cattle and scrub churches."

The rural church is more important as a center of social life than is the city institution, and it deserves an equipment commensurate with that position. The rural church has made a most remarkable contribution to American Methodism, but in this period of good roads, automobiles, and other conveniences which are enjoyed by the country people, a more beautiful and adequate church edifice is required. Dr. T. D. Ellis has stated the situation as follows: "People may still go to the old family

church, one room poorly furnished, but they are going because of sentiment. It is necessary for us to build religious centers from which will radiate light to a large country community if we expect to maintain our grip upon rural sections."

With financial assistance, a transformation can be made in the small dilapidated church buildings. Dr. Ormond has stated that the "rural church house equipment should be only the means to an end, but it is a necessary means and therefore is to be highly appreciated. I have found that improved rural church buildings, architecturally beautiful and with facilities for educational and social activities, inspire congregations to maintain more comprehensive and effective programs of worship."

Such a transformation is now taking place in North Carolina through the financial assistance granted by the Duke Endowment. In 1924 James B. Duke, a Methodist layman, set up the Duke Endowment for educational, religious, and social purposes. In his indenture he provided that a certain per cent of the annual income should be used to build Methodist churches in the sparsely settled districts of rural North Carolina.

James B. Duke had been greatly influenced by his father, Washington Duke, a loyal supporter of the church, who always acknowledged his debt to the Methodist circuit riders. James B. Duke once remarked: "My old daddy always said that if he amounted to anything in life, it was due to the Methodist circuit riders who frequently visited his home and whose preaching and counsel brought out the best that was in him. If I amount to anything in the world, I owe it to my daddy and the Methodist church."

Through his generous gift James B. Duke repaid a debt to the circuit rider preachers of Methodism. Between December 11, 1924, and December 31, 1940, the sum of $585,996 was donated from the Duke Endowment for the building of five hundred rural Methodist churches, which have usually replaced

one-room houses. A new type of Methodist church building is being constructed in rural North Carolina, edifices that are a credit to Methodism and which often have the equipment formerly found only in cities.

The Duke Endowment gifts and the donations and loans made by the Southern Board have encouraged the rural congregations to make larger contributions toward their own churches. It is estimated that since 1924 the average annual increase in value of rural churches in North Carolina Methodism has been one quarter of a million dollars.

ABANDONED CHURCHES. There are thousands of abandoned churches throughout the country. A survey made in Ohio in 1920 showed that there were one-sixth as many abandoned church buildings as active churches, and an investigation made by Dr. Elmer T. Clark in the South and Southwest showed that the number of deserted Methodist churches was ten per cent of those continuing in active operation. This situation prevails all over America.

Churches are abandoned for a variety of reasons. The members migrate to new areas, leaving a building without a congregation; two or more congregations unite, utilizing for the total group only one building and leaving one or more unoccupied; lack of money and of pastoral oversight are also prolific sources of church decay. In almost every rural section and in many urban centers throughout the United States one finds buildings, large and small, which once housed working, worshipping, thriving Methodist congregations, but which are now empty and neglected, given over to the bats and owls, and falling into decay. Here and there the investigator encounters garages, second-rate apartment houses, stores, and business enterprises of various kinds occupying the premises which formerly housed Methodist churches.

Unused church property creates a problem, to the solution

of which the church extension administrative agencies have devoted thought and service. It has been suggested that such property be transferred to the Board of Missions and Church Extension, to be held in trust and administered by the executive officers of the Section of Church Extension until it can be used again or sold to advantage. Such a policy would tend to prevent deterioration and destruction and would also facilitate the opening of such structures as missionary enterprises.

The problem of the unused church house, however, is not exclusively a church extension problem. It is a missionary and evangelistic problem also. In most instances such edifices are still surrounded by a large population, for in few sections of the country has the population actually decreased. The Methodists formerly constituting the membership have migrated to the towns and cities, or into other sections of the community, where they have united with other churches. Their places were not left vacant, however, for a new and different type of citizenship emerged or moved into the area. The deserted churches in the cities are surrounded by teeming multitudes of Negroes and industrial workers, while those in the rural areas are surrounded by share-croppers and others. These people the Methodist Church has not been able to reach. Abandoned churches, therefore, in nearly every instance, represent the failure of Methodist evangelism to reach and influence persons of the very type among which the early Methodist movement originated and flourished.

This constitutes one of the outstanding problems facing the missionary and evangelistic agencies of modern Methodism. Because of the inability of the Church to reach the more or less submerged masses of people, it faces the serious danger of becoming a complacent and conventionalized Church of the middle and upper classes, and thereby losing its influence among the multitudes. That the underprivileged masses are not impervious

to the gospel is evidenced by the fact that in every area where abandoned Methodist churches are found may also be found thriving sects of a peculiar or fanatical nature, which are making progress among the very people left behind by the withdrawing Methodist church. All over the country "Holy Rollers" and similar groups are occupying buildings that were formerly Methodist churches, and they are gathering into their folds thousands of the people which are too often the despair of Methodist evangelism.

At this point there emerges a problem to which immediate attention must be directed. The Methodism which began on the commons of England and wrote its most glorious history along the American frontier must not be driven from the highways and byways inhabited by the plain millions. The church extension agencies must—they can and will—co-operate with the evangelistic and missionary leaders of the church to solve this most perplexing problem.

HOMELESS CONGREGATIONS. It is an interesting fact that while there are across the nation thousands of abandoned churches clamoring to be used, there are also in other sections, sometimes even nearby, a large number of Methodist congregations that have no buildings in which to worship God. The question of the homeless congregation is of peculiar interest to the church extension agencies.

In 1911 there were 16,477 houses of worship in the bounds of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and at the same time there were 2,942 homeless congregations. In 1937 the Methodist Episcopal Church reported that approximately 500 societies were worshipping in basements, store rooms, school houses, residences, club houses, motion picture theaters, farm buildings, and churches of other denominations. The work of the Boards has reduced the number of homeless congregations in a promising degree, but it is still true that very many Methodist congregations are

without houses of worship. At the present time (1941) the statistics indicate that there are 492 Methodist societies in the Southeastern and South Central Jurisdictions that have no church buildings. If this situation prevails proportionately throughout the entire country, as it probably does, there are

LOG CABINS AS CHURCHES

"Scarcely had the hardy pioneer nailed the slab on his rude hut, before the preacher had entered to bless it by his prayers and to consecrate it to the services of God as a Bethel in the wilderness."

considerably more than 1,000 homeless Methodist congregations in the country at the moment of great prosperity.

Perhaps these are newly organized groups, in which case they hold the promise of the future. Inasmuch as Methodism has never become permanent and exercised a large influence until it erected a building, the further progress of the church demands that these homeless congregations be housed as speedily as pos-

sible. Their weakness is in most cases temporary; in due course they will doubtless develop into strong and self-supporting churches. The Boards of Church Extension were founded upon the theory that the strong must help the weak and that Methodism is a family with a common interest. Perhaps no greater service can be rendered by the more fortunate Methodists than to aid the homeless societies in securing church edifices.

INADEQUATE CHURCHES. In the previous chapter mention was made of the program of the modern church, especially in the fields of worship, religious education, recreation and fellowship, and social service, and it was pointed out that this enlarged program had influenced architecture and created the need for more adequately equipped churches. If there are persons who feel that church extension service is no longer necessary, their illusions would be dispelled by a visit to various sections of American Methodism. There would be found thousands of church buildings still lacking equipment for the modern church program. There are many Methodist churches that are guilty of the "seven deadly sins" of church architecture enumerated by Halford E. Luccock: "a dark, damp and unattractive basement; the Akron Plan Sunday school; the pulpit in a corner; a vast array of brass organ pipes; sliding doors; uncomfortable seats; lack of plenty of pure fresh air."

In 1925 it was reported that "in the Dakota Conference we have 220 church buildings. Only 21 of these have anything approximating a modern equipment and most of them are one-room buildings, lacking even a basement." The Dakota Conference was not an exception, for that description applied equally to many other Methodist conferences. In 1932 it was estimated that 11,000 church buildings in the Methodist Episcopal Church were one-room structures.

This situation is seen to be the more tragic when the religious education program of the one-room churches is contrasted with

the program of the adjacent modern public schools. Under such circumstances young people cannot be made to feel that religious training is as important as secular education. In 1931 a prominent architect declared that "ninety-five per cent of the building and equipment structure of American Protestantism is inefficient for the ministry expected of the church today and for the program of service and activities to which the church itself is committed." The figure stated may be high for united Methodism, but it must be admitted that there are thousands of Methodist churches that are entirely unadapted to the needs of the communities in which they stand. To provide adequate buildings is one of the continuing tasks of church extension.

There is also a problem of the repairing and remodeling of Methodist churches. This need is perhaps greater now because during the recent depression the proper upkeep of churches was necessarily neglected. A district superintendent in 1929 declared, "I tremble when I think that fifty per cent of the churches on this district will be out of commission this winter. I am doing my best to repair some of them before bad weather sets in." A survey in 1940 of 193 districts in united Methodism showed 1,370 churches needing financial assistance for repairs to save their buildings. Some edifices have been neglected so long that they must be replaced by new structures or thoroughly repaired if Methodism is not to go out of existence in those communities. This urgent need for remodeling and repairing Methodist chapels and churches cannot be overestimated.

THE NEGRO CHURCH. In the previous chapter mention was made of the work of the Boards of Church Extension for the Negro congregations. This is one of the continuing needs of the church and a field of much future usefulness. United American Methodism should not permit the continuance of the present deplorable situation with reference to the houses of worship provided for our Negro constituency.

In the Central Jurisdiction of The Methodist Church, composed of the Negro conferences of the former Methodist Episcopal Church, there are nineteen annual conferences, 1,800 charges, 1,700 preachers and 317,000 church members. The 3,300 church buildings of the Jurisdiction are worth less than $4,500 each—and very much less in the deep South, where the great majority of Negroes live and where the need is proportionately greater. In Georgia and South Carolina the church houses of the Central Jurisdiction are valued at $3,000 each and in Mississippi they are worth less than $4,000.

The Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, bound by historical sentimental, and moral ties to the former Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and therefore to the united Church, is about as strong numerically as the Central Jurisdiction, but its buildings are probably worse.

All this indicates, what, indeed, is well known to all persons on the ground, that most of the Negro Methodist churches are run-down, ramshackle structures, which no congregation of white Methodists would think of using. They are totally inadequate for any service of worship or any program of modern church work. Improvement at this point is long overdue, and must engage the attention of church extension agencies for many years of the immediate future. There will be a pressing need for church extension as long as so many of our Negro people are denied even the most elementary facilities for the worship and service of God.

EMERGENCY CASES. In discussing the need for future church extension activity the relief of various emergency situations cannot be omitted. For many years this has engaged the attention of and required the funds supplied by the general church extension agencies of Methodism. This relief, of course, must continue, since Methodist churches may be expected to suffer from various disasters in the future as they have in the

past. Fires, earthquakes, tornadoes, and floods will continue to ravage the country and these calamities pay no special respect to the churches. Only in unusual circumstances can a local congregation immediately rebuild or repair a building that has been burned or washed away. Unless, therefore, the ravages of nature are permitted to disrupt, if not destroy, the program of Methodism in many areas, the Section of Church Extension must be ever ready to come to the rescue when disasters fall.

PARSONAGES. It is the historical policy of American Methodism to provide homes for its preachers. In the case of ministers engaged in actual pastoral work these homes are furnished by the churches they serve, and districts maintain parsonages for the district superintendents; colleges customarily provide residences for their presidents, and the general church has episcopal residences or makes rental allowances for its bishops.

This historical policy of the church has been and remains of first importance. In multiplied thousands of communities it would be utterly impossible to maintain a preacher, and thereby give the gospel to the people, except for the fact that a home is provided for the minister and his family.

It has already been pointed out that the former Methodist Episcopal Church, South, supported a considerable program of assistance in the erection of parsonages through its Board of Church Extension, and this has been carried over into the united Church. Although there are approximately 22,000 Methodist parsonages in the United States, it still remains true that more than 2,000 Methodist preachers are homeless. Furthermore, many of the parsonages in existence are poor structures, in need of reconstruction or repair. As in the case of churches, a relatively small donation or a loan will ordinarily stimulate a charge to supply a parsonage worth many times as much as the connectional fund involved.

CHAPTER VI

CHURCH EXTENSION AND THE FUTURE

(Continued)

In the previous chapter an attempt was made to outline the present organization of the Board of Missions and Church Extension of The Methodist Church, of which the Section of Church Extension is an important part, and to suggest a few of the areas in which church extension will be needed in the future. Mention has been made of the rural church, abandoned churches, homeless congregations, Negro churches, and emergency cases. In the present chapter other equally important needs are to be pointed out.

THE CITY CHURCH. Much of the early church extension activity was confined to the rural areas and the small towns. This was necessarily true when Methodism was straining every nerve to keep up with the advancing frontier, along which no cities had arisen. The smaller centers and the open country will continue to demand large aid in providing houses of worship, for Methodism is still largely a rural movement in that most of its churches are in the towns and country.

In recent years, however, a striking change has taken place in the character of American life. For the first time in our history a majority of the people live in cities. The movement from the country to the large centers of population is still under way and may be expected to continue indefinitely. This fact means that the city has assumed a new significance to the church.

"The time has come when we must recognize that the majority of the people of the United States dwell in cities," says Dr.

T. D. Ellis. "The city is the dominating influence in American life. It is so not only because the majority of the people live in cities, but because they are the centers of education and industry, wherein reside the people who today exert and always have exerted major influence in the life of the world. Should Methodism lose the city it will take a secondary place among the great churches of the world."

The future of America, and the future of the Church in America, depends on the adoption of a statesmanlike ecclesiastical policy with reference to the rapidly expanding urban centers. It will not be an easy task to work out such a policy, for the Church in this country developed as a rural institution. This statement is not true of Christianity in other lands, where it has usually occupied the cities and from them spread through the adjacent territory. But the church in America was forced by circumstances to accommodate itself to rural situations and to adapt its message to the rural mind. To this day, therefore, American Christianity, and especially American Methodism, is under the influence of the rural spirit. Its preachers have come largely from the country and towns, and their moral, spiritual, and social ideas are reflections of that environment. Even our outstanding city churches are often little more than "country churches moved to town;" trying to carry on amid the thronging multitude the same program of worship and service that was developed in the small communities.

But the world is dominated by great cities, and the United States is now no exception to that general rule. If, therefore, The Methodist Church is to do its share in the evangelization and Christianization of the nation, it must give immediate attention to the matter of adjusting its ideas and program to the new situation.

To capture the city will require the best thinking and the utmost energy of the whole Church. Especially must reliance be

placed upon its evangelistic, missionary, and educational agencies. All these, however, will be futile without a carefully planned and vigorously executed policy of church extension, since the church building will necessarily condition and determine the type of program that is carried on therein.

This is not the place for an exhaustive discussion of the needs of the city church. It should be stressed, however, that almost every influence bearing upon the city church has implications for church extension. Many urban sections are growing so rapidly that churches must be built not for the present alone, but for the future; and it is scarcely to be expected that the present membership can provide unaided the type of building adequate to meet the future demands.

In certain parts of every city, notably downtown and industrial quarters, the opposite situation prevails. In these sections some large church buildings are standing, but the shifting of the population has carried away the substantial membership, while people of a lower social and economic status have crowded in. The new residents are not being won by the conventional program of preaching which has characterized the church; nor would they be financially capable of supporting the church even if the old methods should win them. An entirely new type of activity is indicated in such cases. Institutional features, especially, must be added. This means that the buildings, even the greatest and finest of them, are outmoded and must be reconstructed to meet the demands of the new situation. Thus church extension becomes necessary, not only to the salvation of the churches themselves, but to the progress of the Christian gospel in these areas.

Probably the most perplexing problem in connection with religious work in our great cities is the migration of the upper and middle classes of the population from the city proper to the suburbs and adjoining countryside. In recent times the

shift to the suburbs has grown to large proportions. The suburban dwellers are for the most part the very people who make up the membership of the church and provide its financial support. This situation creates a double problem—that of maintaining the churches left behind in the city, and providing new churches in the suburbs. Dr. T. D. Ellis has asked, "What is the church to do for these people who are moving out along the great paved highways, ten to thirty miles from our cities? Would it not be wise for us to have funds sufficient to secure locations for future churches in all of the communities growing up under the new conditions?"

In every urban section of America the same phenomenon is being witnessed. Millions of people are seeking new homes in the country. Real estate developments spring up overnight and new communities appear along every highway leading into the city. In no case can the population of any large American center be determined by the census figures, for the metropolitan area always contains many more people than the census enumerators find inside the corporate limits.

The problem of providing church facilities for these modern "white collar migrants" is of primary importance and requires the wisest planning as well as the financial aid of the church extension agencies.

NEW COMMUNITIES. New communities are constantly rising in every section of the United States. The suburban developments mentioned in the preceding paragraphs illustrate this fact, but these are by no means the only important new population groups that must be reckoned with.

The present military emergency has brought about the rise of new settlements all over the country. Many of these will be permanent and must be served by the Protestant Church. It is by no means certain that even the great training camps will be of a temporary character, for many persons believe that the

United States will in the future be forced to stress military preparedness more than ever before and may even adopt the principle of universal military service. In that event, the large number of great encampments, found in nearly every state, will become permanent establishments, always filled with American youth.

The government has built and is building many large towns or villages, of the permanency of which there can be no doubt. Near a great regular army post in Georgia, for example, there is being erected a new community for non-commissioned officers and their families. This will be a town of three or four thousand people, and no religious facilities of any kind have been provided. In other parts of the country similar towns are being built.

The same situation prevails at certain great government projects of a civil nature. Whole towns have sprung up in connection with the development of the Tennessee Valley Authority in Tennessee and Alabama. The same is true in the immediate vicinity of the great dams in the West. No adequate religious program has been developed for the people in such communities. Restrictions imposed by the government limit the work that may be done by single denominations and thus make necessary the co-operation of all the Protestant denominations. Here is a field which must not be neglected by the church extension agencies.

The development of the textile industry in the South has given rise to many new communities. The traveler from Virginia to Georgia will see evidences of the rapid industrialization of the Southern states in hundreds of mill villages of recent origin. Gaston County, North Carolina, alone contains more than one hundred mills. The policy of the textile industry to provide homes for the workers in communities adjacent to the

factories has been responsible for the creation of the well-known "mill village."

The mill villages are of diverse types. Many of them are model communities, wherein the corporations spend large sums to provide homes, conveniences, schools, and recreation facilities

"BRUSH ARBOR" CHURCHES
In the frontier period when cabins and barns proved too small, services were held under brush arbors.

for their employees, who enjoy a standard of living much superior to their previous condition or to that which they could provide from their own earnings alone. Unfortunately, not all of them are of this superior type. In some villages living quarters are poor and conditions prevail not dissimilar to those of the slum sections of the cities. In all of them, however, the people are predominantly of pure-blooded American stock,

nourished in the Protestant tradition and favorably inclined to the Protestant gospel. Few foreigners, hence few Roman Catholics, are found in the mill villages of the South.

Often a kind of paternalism prevails in which the owner of the mill lives in close association with his employees. Frequently the "boss" and his family attend the village church with the families of the workmen, and there is a large degree of friendship and social intercourse between them. In nearly every case the mill owner will gladly provide a site, help erect a church building, and contribute liberally toward the support of a pastor in order to provide religious advantages for his people. The textile villages provide a field relatively easy to occupy, and church extension agencies can secure large returns from relatively small investments. In 1925 the Board of Church Extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, donated $10,000 to assist in building churches in the mill towns of South Carolina. This gesture interested certain mill owners, and as a result of the movement thus started five church buildings costing about $20,000 each were erected.

The new communities mentioned above are but illustrations of a nation-wide development. In 1940 an investigation made in 193 districts in The Methodist Church revealed the startling fact that in these districts alone 397 new communities allocated to the Methodists for occupancy had no churches of any kind. If this sampling represents the whole country, it means that The Methodist Church is responsible for two thousand churchless communities.

During the frontier period it was the glory of Methodism that it entered every new settlement. It was said that the two first sounds heard in the wilderness were the ring of the pioneer's axe as he cleared a place for his home in the forest, and the "hello" of the circuit rider who rode up to the settler's door. This was the period of Methodism's extraordinary expansion.

When the first Methodist preacher visited New Orleans and was driven away by the hostility of the people, a citizen remarked, "That is the last we will see of the Methodists." A wiser neighbor replied, "You are mistaken; the Methodist circuit riders will return, and the next time they will come to stay." The Methodist Church, through its evangelistic, missionary, and church extension agencies, must occupy the new communities springing up all over America as the church occupied the expanding frontier.

SUITABLE LOCATIONS. Bishop Francis Asbury complained that the early Methodists frequently exercised poor statesmanship in locating their churches, pointing out that too many congregations erected buildings on any free lots that might be given to them. There is still some ground for a similar complaint. In many places the governing consideration in the location of churches is the price of real estate or the liberality of a land owner. Churches have even been erected on unsalable lots given by an apparently generous real estate operator, whose real motive was to enhance the value of adjacent land. Large sums of money have been invested in churches that were doomed to failure from the beginning because an unfortunate building site had been selected.

For the guidance of church groups seeking locations for their houses of worship, the church extension agencies offer expert and unbiased advice, based on careful surveys of population trends and other conditions in the communities involved. These agencies insist, as a condition of granting aid, that churches be advantageously located. In the future this type of service will be especially useful. Unprejudiced and objective studies will be made in all American cities and in the suburbs adjacent thereto. The Section of Church Extension, basing its advice upon accurate data and uninfluenced by the sentimental considerations which may appeal strongly to the residents of a given commu-

nity, should be able to give guidance which will not only save money, but insure for the new church a maximum of usefulness for the longest period of time.

ARCHITECTURAL ADVICE. In a previous chapter mention was made of the architectural service offered by the church extension agencies of American Methodism. Little need be added to the discussion of the subject at this point. The need for such help will certainly continue and constantly become more pressing.

Almost every changing feature of American life has a bearing upon the type of church buildings needed. In no American community is the old, one-room church house of our fathers adequate to meet the religious need of the present day. The population deserting the downtown or industrial sections of a city may leave behind them a large church which was erected at an original cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars, but which is almost useless to the incoming people, whose needs demand an institutional type of church program. In the suburbs the call is for a church building of a special type, providing facilities for religious education and recreation as well as aids and stimuli to worship.

Church architecture is a specialized field. Few architects are really capable of making plans and specifications for modern church buildings. This work requires a knowledge of social conditions, psychological factors, population elements and trends, and a spiritual insight not possessed by the average commercial architect. The church extension agencies of Protestantism are rendering and will continue to render an invaluable service in placing competent architectural advice at the disposal of the churches.

DEBT RAISING AND FINANCE. There has already been offered in these pages a discussion of the situation in Methodism with reference to church debts and the serv-

ice offered by the church extension agencies in the field of finance. Fortunately, the Church has passed out of the speculative era, during which, influenced by current big business procedure, there was reckless expenditure of borrowed money followed by the embarrassment and hardship of the depression. During that period the help, financial and otherwise, of the church extension agencies aided in saving multitudes of churches which otherwise would have been lost, and some of which had actually been sold under foreclosure proceedings. It is probable that the hard lesson has been well learned and the churches will pursue wiser courses of action in the future.

Nevertheless, there will probably always be debts on Methodist property. This is, indeed, both necessary and wise, since any existing group must build not only for its own present needs, but for a much larger need which is likely to appear in the future.

United Methodism in the United States now has an indebtedness of more than $63,000,000 on its churches and parsonages alone. This is a staggering sum in itself, but not excessive for the church's tremendous membership of 8,000,000 people. It is considerably less than ten per cent of the value of the property on which it rests; the Methodist churches and parsonages in this country are valued at $741,000,000. Most of the churches are able to pay their debts in due course without any undue embarrassment or outside aid, but a survey of about one-fourth of the districts in 1940 revealed 517 Methodist churches with critical debt situations.

It is much easier to make a debt than to pay it. Nearly any church can borrow money, but the ability to organize and inspire the people to raise large sums to repay the amount is not always present. In nearly every case, however, the members are financially able to pay their debts under the proper leadership and guidance. The Section of Church Extension, through its De-

partment of Finance and Debt Raising, offers help to debt-burdened churches. Its workers are experienced in financial campaigns and administration, and through their co-operation Methodist congregations may, at minimum expense, adjust their financial problems.

EDUCATIONAL CENTERS. Thousands of Methodist boys and girls leave their homes each year and enroll in colleges and universities. The years spent by these young people in institutions of higher learning constitute one of the most critical periods of life. The church has come to realize that it must follow its youth and maintain contacts with them during their educational careers.

In many educational centers the local Methodist churches are not prepared adequately to serve the students, whose presence makes necessary a special type of program, with building facilities adjusted thereto. Not only are the local churches in many instances financially unable to provide such facilities, but it is scarcely to be expected of them. The young people who constitute a large portion of the group to be served do not belong to the constituency of the local church. More and more, therefore, Methodism, along with other denominations, is expecting all the churches of a conference or state to help maintain in college and university centers a church that will adequately minister to the young people drawn from all parts of that conference or state.

The church extension agencies have rendered much aid at this point, and the demand for such aid may be expected to increase. Since the World War both the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, have set aside funds for church building enterprises in educational centers. Especially notable at this point has been the service of the latter church. The General Conference of 1922, in dealing with the disposition of a large portion of the funds raised in the Mission-

ary Centenary Campaign for War Work, turned over to its Board of Church Extension a large sum of nearly $900,000, to be used for the purpose of assisting in the erection of church buildings in educational centers, with special reference to state institutions and independent foundations. The expenditure of this fund resulted in the building of a large number of fine modern churches in the college centers of the South. In this field lies a very great opportunity for service in the immediate future.

EVANGELISM. On December 27, 1826, S. Martindale, of Troy, New York, wrote: "It is true that there is much religious excitement in this city; our meeting house is too small to contain the ordinary congregation and we are called upon daily to enlarge our house or build a new one that willing hearers may have the Word of Life." In every period evangelism and church extension have been closely related. A successful revival almost always creates the desire—and often, the necessity—for a permanent or better house of worship, and, as has already been pointed out, the results of evangelism have been nowhere enduring except in those places where meeting houses are speedily erected.

There is a growing sentiment that Methodism should undertake a new and aggressive movement of evangelism among the masses of the people. Any such movement of a widespread nature will probably, of course, find it necessary to develop new methods and agencies. The unchurched millions are not attracted to revival meetings in the church house as in former years. Nevertheless, evangelism and some form of church extension must go hand in hand.

It has been suggested that the Board of Missions and Church Extension, through its Section of Church Extension, should unite with the General Commission on Evangelism in providing itinerant meeting houses or churches on wheels. It has been

reported that the Roman Catholic Church is making, in the rural areas of the South, much use of trailers, transformed into miniature chapels. Such a Methodist itinerant house of worship going into unchurched and isolated communities might perform a lasting service in laying the foundations for future churches.

FOREIGN GROUPS. Home mission work is carried on by The Methodist Church among many foreign groups in America. This has been true from the beginning, and Methodism has developed strong churches and conferences among the German, Scandinavian, and other immigrants.

One of the most far-reaching programs of missionary work ever undertaken by any denomination was carried out by the Methodists in connection with the Bethelship, in New York harbor. Early in the nineteenth century an old sailing vessel was secured and transformed into a mission for Scandinavian sailors. On board the Bethelship, Jenny Lind, the greatest singer of her time, was converted. Here also were brought into the Methodist fold many of the Danes, Swedes, and Norwegians who passed through New York harbor on their way to the agricultural sections of the West, where they established Methodist churches, districts, and conferences. Sailors converted on the decks of the Bethelship went back to Europe and started the Methodist work which has since developed into strong annual conferences in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, and the Balkan countries. The mission to the Scandinavians on the Bethelship resulted in the organization of 12 conferences with 617 churches, and 540 preachers in the United States and the development of Methodist work in four foreign mission fields.

At the present time Methodism carries on an extensive program of home missions among the Orientals on the Pacific coast, the Mexicans in the Southwest, and the Cubans in Florida. The success of the work among these people is bound up with the church extension enterprise. Many of these people

have come to the United States from countries noted for great churches and cathedrals and are, therefore, accustomed to the finest facilities for worship. Little permanent success may be expected, therefore, as long as the Orientals must worship in store houses or old residences and the church among the Mexicans is an adobe shack. Many appeals for church extension aid are coming from the foreign-speaking groups and these missions open up a large field of future service.

FOREIGN MISSIONS. The Division of Home Missions and Church Extension works only in the United States, Hawaii, Alaska, and Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic. The Board of Church Extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, has given some assistance to churches in foreign mission fields, and has a loan fund the income from which must be spent in Cuba. In the Northern branch of the Church the work of church extension was confined to the home field, and such is the policy in the united Church. All foreign work of whatever kind is administered by the Division of Foreign Missions and the Foreign Department of the Woman's Division.

Church extension in the foreign fields of The Methodist Church represents one of the greatest missionary needs, however it may be administered. It has been said that the mandates, "Go ye into all the world" and "Let them build me a sanctuary," are closely related. The foreign fields represent the geographical frontiers of Methodism today. In the United States church extension activity consists for the most part in building better churches where churches already exist, but in the foreign fields there is an insistent call for churches from hundreds of places where there is no Christian house of worship of any kind. In almost every foreign field it is relatively easy to form groups of seekers or believers, but these groups will speedily disappear unless buildings are provided. The demand for churches abroad is daily becoming more insistent.

INTERDENOMINATIONAL CO-OPERATION. Many sections of the United States are overchurched. In small towns all over the country may be found five or six competing denominations, competition between which effectually prevents the erection of even one really adequate church building, the payment of a living salary to a capable minister, or the development of a religious program suitable for the community. Such situations might be considered as demanding, not church extension, but "church contraction."

This situation grew out of the historical development of religion in this country. During the frontier period there was room enough for all. Theological doctrines and definitions which are not now emphasized were then regarded as being among the essentials of the faith. Since the preachers were men of deep convictions and great aggressiveness, denominational rivalries could scarcely be avoided. Competition was really a religious virtue in those days; it was, indeed, no small factor in the rapid and successful evangelization of the nation. There were early attempts at union, but not infrequently the union churches become centers of strife and division.

Regardless of the historical background, however, few persons today would defend the situation that exists in a town with five or six churches and no resident minister. A study in 1934 showed that only sixty-two per cent of the village churches had resident pastors. Such a situation has a bad spiritual effect, results in poor pastoral oversight, prevents an adequate religious education program and other community projects related to religious activity, and defeats evangelism by bringing religion into disrepute.

Methodism opposes denominational competition. It has to a remarkable extent been loyal to the statement of Bishop Francis Asbury, that religious people have too little time to waste any of it in denominational rivalry. The various Boards of Church

Extension have always taken their stand against it, and in recent years have adopted a general policy, "No missionary aid to competitive churches." The Boards have always contended that their function was not to use benevolent funds for the purpose of entering territory already sufficiently occupied by Christian forces.

The Board of Home Missions and Church Extension serves as the representative of The Methodist Church in co-operating with the Home Missions Council and other interdenominational bodies that are seeking to ally the total Protestant force in an offensive against irreligion and sin and in the prevention of harmful rivalry. Territory may be allocated among the denominations for occupancy. Sentiment against overlapping in church extension activities may be created. Researches may be made that will be of great help to local churches, districts, and annual conferences with reference to church building and evangelism. Only through such a plan of interdenominational co-operation can the over-churching of communities be prevented and the whole field adequately occupied.

CONCLUSION. In bringing to a conclusion this review and discussion of church extension in American Methodism, it appears pertinent to make three observations.

1. An outstanding function of church extension activity is to keep alive and emphasize the significance of the sanctuary. The church building is much more than a meeting house for Christian people. It is a temple and an altar. It is holy, and more sacred than any other building in the world. Its presence in any community is a standing witness to the fact that God is in that community as a living reality and a vital transforming force. However much we may stress utility and the incorporation of facilities for social and educational activities, the main emphasis must always be placed upon its character as a house of worship and a place where men meet God.

Methodist churches are, therefore, becoming more beautiful and more conducive to a spirit of devotion. Dr. Ralph W. Sockman, in dedicating the magnificent Byzantine altar in Christ Church, New York City, said: "To continue completing of Christ Church in these difficult days is a high form of national and spiritual defense. It fortifies our faith to be building a shrine

A METHODIST CAMP MEETING

During the summer months thousands of pioneer Methodists gathered in groves and in forests to spend a week in worship. Thousands were converted in these camp meetings.

for worship when bombers are bent on destroying altars. Under the stress of present dangers we must not surrender to immediacy and neglect the longer view. True preparedness is a matter of resourcefulness and morale. If we are to preserve the

Christian, American way of life we must fertilize the soil of our citizenry with faith and hope and love."

This high conception of the significance of the Methodist church building is to be further stimulated, without losing sight of utilitarian needs and without wasteful expenditure of large funds on adornment. The building must more and more be the dwelling place of the Eternal Spirit in the world. This can and should be true of the humblest country church house, as well as of the most expensive temple in our largest city.

2. The church extension agencies exist to inspire congregations, and not to relieve them of responsibility. A church will not be built outright for any group or congregation, but groups and congregations will be given encouragement, advice, and material aid sufficient to inspire them to make worthy sacrifices for their own altars. Outright gifts for purely local purposes might easily operate to the spiritual impoverishment of the people, but the careful administration of church extension will prevent any such unfortunate result.

The past record of church extension in Methodism is wholly satisfactory at this point. A small donation or a moderate loan has, in thousands of cases, turned discouragement into hope, stimulated congregations to a new liberality, and brought great returns to the advancing kingdom. "Nearly forty years ago," wrote a Methodist preacher, "you gave us $100 toward building a small church. This out-of-the-way place where you once invested $100 has since sent 50 young people to college, raised 42 school teachers, produced 7 members of the conference, 5 local preachers, 2 college presidents, 7 college professors, 2 foreign missionaries, 2 trained nurses, and 2 bank presidents."

3. The future success of church extension depends on the sympathetic co-operation and support of "the people called Methodists." This is particularly true of the Methodists in those local communities where the church extension program is ac-

tually operative. The Section of Church Extension is not an independent entity in itself. It is only the arm of the church—the instrument by means of which the interest, prayers, and gifts of the Methodist people are concentrated and transformed into actuality.

In a certain city wherein The Methodist Church is strong and influential, a large migration to the nearby countryside has developed a suburban area composed of hundreds of homes erected by middle and upper class people. In this section there is no church of any kind. To occupy this strategic section for Methodism both the annual conference and the district conference took action and appointed a representative committee of laymen and preachers to survey the territory, select a location, and build a Methodist church. All this was done. A magnificent lot was secured under option, arrangements were made to begin church school work and worship services in a high school building recently erected, and a new Methodist church was about to come into existence in a community the character of which made an early and large success a practical certainty.

At this juncture a protest against the whole movement was filed with the committee by the official board of another Methodist church located two or three miles away. The protesting church had a magnificent building, but its membership was so large that if even one-fourth of the members should attend at any one time, they could not be accommodated within the walls of the building. A few of these members lived in the new suburb about to be occupied, and the fear that some of them might unite with the new church prompted the great city group to protest this church extension activity. While the committee was holding up its work and trying to appease the protesting church, another denomination entered the field and announced the actual beginning of work in the schoolhouse which had been tentatively promised to the Methodists. The new enter-

prise has not yet been brought to completion, and the most promising field in the city may be lost to Methodism.

In another city wherein Methodism is strong and influential a similar situation prevailed. A large suburban area had developed in which no church of any kind existed. The Methodist authorities determined to occupy that field and appointed a committee to survey the situation and secure a proper location. The conference and district made a large appropriation to support a preacher, and a young and vigorous member of the conference was appointed. The pastors of the two greatest Methodist churches in the city, both of which had numerous members in the new area, made public announcements and wrote personal letters to their members residing in the suburb to be occupied, commending the new enterprise and asking their people to co-operate fully, even to the extent of transferring their membership to the new church if they so desired.

This type of co-operation resulted in the furtherance of the fraternal spirit of the Methodists in that city and the rapid growth of a new church. In two years a house of worship was erected. Between two hundred and three hundred members were received, the complete organization of a Methodist church was perfected and set in operation, and the charge became entirely self-supporting.

This is a true tale of two cities. It points its own moral. Given the spirit of co-operation and mutual sacrifice, the extension of The Methodist Church into every area of life and the world may become an accomplished reality.

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